三国志 59

秋風五丈原

横山光輝

希望コミックス 180

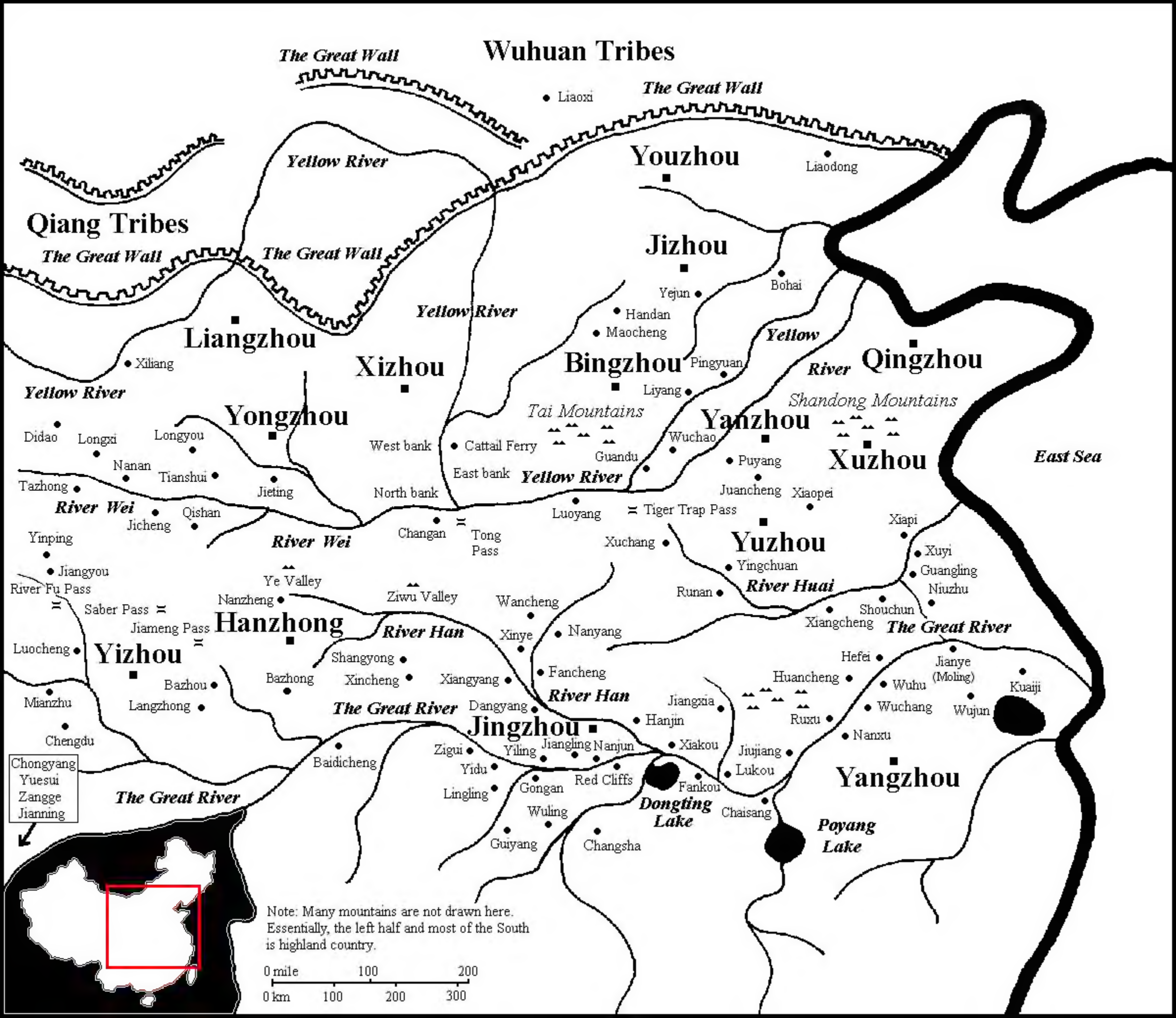
SANGOKUSHI

59

AUTUMN WINDS OF WUZHANG

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU

ZHUGE LIANG
KONGMING


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

MAJOR CHARACTERS OF SANGOKUSHI

CAI MAO:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU BIAO, WHO BECAME THE SUPREME ADMIRAL OF WEI'S NAVY WHEN JINGZHOU SURRENDERED TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 25, HE IS FRAMED BY ZHOU YU'S PLOT AND THUS EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. RISES TO BECOME KING OF WEI BUT DECLINES TO BECOME EMPEROR HIMSELF. PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS IN VOLUME 42.

CAO HONG:
YOUNGER COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL.

CAO PI:
CAO CAO'S ELDEST SON WHO SUCCEEDS TO KING OF WEI AND DETHRONES LAST HAN EMPEROR TO BECOME THE FIRST WEI EMPEROR. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 49.

CAO RUI:
ELDEST SON OF CAO PI. SUCCEEDS AFTER HIS FATHER TO BECOME THE SECOND WEI EMPEROR.

CAO REN:
COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL. PORTRAYED AS BRAVE BUT HOT-TEMPERED IN THE STORY.

CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.

CHENG YU:
IMPORTANT AND LOYAL STRATEGIST SERVING CAO CAO.

CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.

DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.

DIAO CHAN:
A MAID TO WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.

DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.

DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.

EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS AND SHE ROSE TO BECOME THE EMPRESS, UTILIZING RUTHLESS MEANS. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY DONG ZHUO WHEN HE CAME TO POWER.

FA ZHENG:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG, BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI DURING HIS CONQUEST OF SHU. HE IS ONE OF LIU BEI'S KEY STRATEGISTS.

GAN NING:
FORMER-PIRATE WHO IS NOW A FIRECE GENERAL OF WU.

GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING, WHO WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO FOR KILLING HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

GUAN PING:
GUAN YU'S ADOPTED SON AS OF VOLUME 19. SERVES ALONGSIDE HIS FATHER UNTIL THEIR DEATH IN VOLUME 42.

GUAN XING:
GUAN YU'S SECOND SON, WHO BECOMES A PROMINENT SHU OFFICER AFTER HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. AFTER THE FAILED SIEGE ON FANCHENG, HE IS EVENTUALLY CAUGHT BY WU FORCES AND PROMPTLY EXECUTED IN VOLUME 42.

GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

HE JIN:
ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER ROSE TO BECOME EMPRESS HE. HE IS KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS DURING THEIR POWER STRUGGLE IN VOLUME 3.

HUANG GAI:
LOYAL GENERAL OF WU, WHOSE FAMILY HAS SERVED THE SUN FAMILY FOR THREE GENERATIONS.

HUANG ZHONG:
AN ELDERLY WARRIOR GENERAL RENOWNED ESPECIALLY FOR HIS SKILL WITH THE BOW. FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT DEFECTS TO LIU BEI IN VOLUME 28. FALLS IN BATTLE AGAINST WU FORCES IN VOLUME 43.

HUA XIN:
WEI MINISTER WHO RISES TO BECOME CHANCELLOR OF WEI UNDER CAO PI'S REIGN.

JIANG QIN:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.

JIANG WEI:
NATIVE OF JICHENG AND FAMED FOR BOTH HIS MENTAL AND MARTIAL PROWESS. ORIGINALLY SERVED WEI, BUT DEFECTED TO SHU IN VOLUME 51 AFTER KONGMING'S PLAN TURNED HIS WEI ALLIES AGAINST HIM.

JIA XU:
FORMER STRATEGIST OF ZHANG XIU, WHO PLOTTED A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, WHICH LEFT DIAN WEI DEAD. AS OF VOLUME 16, HE HAS DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR.

LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.

LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU BETRAYS THEM.

LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO SICKNESS IN VOLUME 22 AND THE CONSEQUENT SUCCESSION CRISIS ALLOWS CAO CAO TO TAKE OVER JINGZHOU.

LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A VIRTUOUS MAN, WHO CLAIMS DESCENT FROM EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI. HE BECOMES AN EMPEROR AND ESTABLISHES A SUCCESOR-DYNASTY TO HAN IN VOLUME 43.

LIU FENG:
LIU BEI'S ADOPTED SON. ORIGINALLY THE NEPHEW OF LIU MI, HE WAS ADOPTED UPON FIRST SIGHT BY LIU BEI WHO TOOK A LIKING TO HIM IN VOLUME 21. HE IS UNFORTUNATELY EXECUTED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 43 AFTER DENYING AID TO GUAN YU.

LIU QI:
ELDEST SON OF LIU BIAO WHO TEMPORARILY LOSES HIS INHERITANCE OF JINGZHOU DUE TO CAI MAO'S PLOT. IN VOLUME 29, HE PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS AND THE RIGHTFUL OWNERSHIP OF JINGZHOU CONTINUES TO BE DEBATED BETWEEN SUN QUAN AND LIU BEI.

LIU ZHANG:
INCOMPETENT RULER OF SHU (ALTERNATIVE NAME FOR YIZHOU). HE SEEKS LIU BEI'S HELP TO FEND OFF ZHANG LU, BUT RELATIONS SOON SOUR AND LIU BEI USURPS HIS RULE OVER SHU. AS OF VOLUME 35, HE IS EXILED TO JINGZHOU.

LU BU:
ALTHOUGH REPUTED TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR, HE IS HOT-HEADED AND RARELY HEEDS WISE ADVICE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES, AND EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

LU MENG:
FIRECE WU GENERAL, WHO AT LAST CONQUERS JINGZHOU FOR SUN QUAN, CAPTURING GUAN YU IN DOING SO. UNFORTUNATELY DIES TO A SUDDEN ILLNESS AFTER GUAN YU'S EXECUTION IN VOLUME 42, CAUSING SOME TO THINK HE WAS CURSED.

LU SU:
IMPORTANT MILITARY GENERAL AND ADVISOR OF WU.

LU XUN:
TALENTED WU OFFICIAL WHO QUICKLY RISES TO FAVOUR AFTER SUCCESSFULLY PLANNING THE CONQUEST OF JINGZHOU.

MA CHAO:
ONE OF THE FIVE TIGER GENERALS OF SHU, WHO ONCE SOUGHT TO AVENGE HIS FATHER'S DEATH AT CAO CAO'S HANDS BEFORE ENTERING LIU BEI'S SERVICE IN VOLUME 35. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 49.

MA DAI:
A NEPHEW OF MA CHAO WHO ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE ALONGSIDE HIS UNCLE.

MA LIANG:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU BEI. HE IS THE FOURTH YOUNGEST OF THE FIVE MA BROTHERS, AND IS NOTED FOR HIS INTELLECT AND WHITE EYEBROWS. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 46.

MA SU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF MA LIANG, WHO, UPON REPORTING THE PASSING OF MA LIANG, CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF KONGMING AND ASSISTED THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGNS. HE HAS SINCE BECOME AN IMPORTANT STRATEGIST OF SHU.

MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIANG AND FATHER OF MA CHAO, WHO SIGNED THE BLOOD-PLEDGE TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 30, HE IS EXECUTED FOR A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT OF CAO CAO.

MENG DA:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG WHO DEFECTS TO LIU BEI, ALONG WITH HIS GOOD FRIENDS ZHANG SONG AND FA ZHENG. HE LATER DEFECTS TO WEI IN VOLUME 43, AFTER REALIZING HE WOULD BE KILLED IN SHU TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR GUAN YU'S DEATH.

MENG HUO:
KING OF THE NANMAN TRIBES, WHO UNSUCCESSFULLY SUPPORTED A REVOLT IN SOUTHERN SHU. KONGMING'S SOUTHERN CAMPAIGNS WERE LAUNCHED IN RETALIATION. AFTER BEING CAPTURED AND RELEASED 7 TIMES, HE SURRENDERS AND BECOMES A LOYAL SUBJECT TO SHU.

MI ZHU:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS.

PANG DE:
FIERCE GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED MA TENG AND THEN MA CHAO. IN VOLUME 36, HE DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SERVICE DUE TO A TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP WITH ZHANG LU, THE LORD OF HANZHONG. PERISHES IN THE BATTLE OF FANCHENG AGAINST GUAN YU IN VOLUME 41.

PANG TONG SHIYUAN:
NICKNAMED THE YOUNG PHOENIX (FENGCHU), HE IS A MASTERFUL STRATEGIST SAID TO BE ZHUGE LIANG'S EQUAL. AFTER ENTERING LIU BEI'S SERVICE, HE TRAGICALLY MET AN EARLY DEATH IN SHU WHEN AMBUSHED BY ZHANG REN IN VOLUME 34.

SIMA YI ZHONGDA:
IMPORTANT MILITARY STRATEGIST OF WEI SINCE CAO CAO'S REIGN. UPON CAO RUI'S SUCCESSION TO THE WEI THRONE, HE WAS BRIEFLY FRAMED FOR TREASON BY ZHUGE LIANG, BUT WAS RESTORED TO POWER IN LIGHT OF THE GROWING CRISIS OF ZHUGE LIANG'S NORTHERN CAMPAIGN AGAINST WEI.

SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.

SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN, WHO TURNS THE SUN FAMILY'S FORTUNE AROUND WITH HIS CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH-LANDS. IN VOLUME 19, A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AND CONFLICT WITH YU JI CAUSES HIS BODY AND MENTAL HEALTH TO WEAKEN. HE SUCCUMBS TO DEATH SHORTLY AFTER.

SUN JIAN:
THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. HOWEVER, HIS ALLIES LIU BIAO AND YUAN SHAO TO TURN ON HIM WHEN HE TRIES TO KEEP THE IMPERIAL SEAL FOR HIMSELF. IN VOLUME 7, HE IS KILLED IN BATTLE AGAINST YUAN SHAO.

SUN QIAN:
TRUSTED ADVISOR TO LIU BEI. (HIS ROLE IS MUCH SMALLER IN SANGOKUSHI COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL NOVEL.)

SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE AND THE CURRENT RULER OF WU, THE SOUTHLANDS OF CHINA.

TAISHI CI:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU YAO BUT DEFECTED TO SUN CE IN VOLUME 11. DURING THE BATTLE OF HEFEI (VOL. 29), HE FALLS PREY TO ZHANG LIAO'S PLAN AND IS KILLED IN BATTLE.

TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG. UPON HIS DEATH, HE BEQUEATHS XUZHOU TO LIU BEI.

THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY WERE KILLED DURING THE POWER STRUGGLE WITH HE JIN IN VOLUME 4.

WANG YUN:
THE MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN THE IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHAN IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

WEI YAN:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT HAS DEFECTED TO LIU BEI ALONG WITH HUANG ZHONG IN VOLUME 28.

WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.

XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.

XU CHU:
TRUSTED BODYGUARD OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.

XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. AFTER A BRIEF STINT OF SERVICE TO LIU BEI, HE IS TRICKED INTO COMING TO XUCHANG AND SERVING CAO CAO (VOLUME 21).

XUN YU:
TALENTED ADVISOR TO CA CAO.

XU HUANG:
CALM AND COLLECTED GENERAL UNDER SERVICE TO CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.

YAN YAN:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU ZHANG BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI AFTER HIS CAPTURE AT ZHANG FEI'S HANDS IN VOLUME 34. HE IS NOTED FOR HIS ENERGY DESPITE HIS OLD AGE.

YU JIN:
GENERAL SERVING CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YUAN SHAO:
OLDER BROTHER OF YUAN SHU AND THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU. AFTER MANY YEARS OF WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO FOR CONTROL OF NORTHERN CHINA, HE AND HIS FAMILY ARE DEFEATED.

YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.

ZHANG BAO:
ELDEST SON OF ZHANG FEI, WHO RISES TO PROMINENCE AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU. HIS TEMPER EVENTUALLY GETS THE BETTER OF HIM, WHEN HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS SUBORDINATES IN VOLUME 43.

ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.

ZHANG LU:
THE LEADER OF THE CELESTIAL MASTERS TAOIST MOVEMENT, AND THE RULER OF HANZHONG. IN VOLUME 36, CAO CAO CONQUERS HANZHONG BUT SPARES ZHANG LU.

ZHANG REN:
ONE OF SHU'S MOST CAPABLE GENERALS WHO PLANNED THE AMBUSH THAT KILLED PANG TONG. HE REFUSED TO SERVE LIU BEI UNLIKE MANY OF HIS COMRADES AND WAS THUS EXECUTED WHEN FINALLY CAPTURED AT THE HANDS OF ZHUGE LIANG (VOLUME 35).

ZHANG SONG:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU ZHANG WHO, UPON FAILING TO MAKE AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN CAO CAO AND LIU ZHANG, SOUGHT LIU BEI'S SUPPORT AND SWITCHED HIS ALLEGIANCE. IN VOLUME 34, HE IS EXECUTED WHEN HIS BROTHER REPORTS HIS BETRAYAL TO LIU ZHANG.

ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER SUBJECT OF YUAN SHAO BUT LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE BECOMES ONE OF LIU BEI'S MOST TRUSTED GENERALS.

ZHOU TAI:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

ZHANG ZHAO:
ELDER STATESMAN AND SUN QUAN'S TRUSTED ADVISOR. HE ORIGINALLY ENTERED SUN CE'S SERVICE ALONG WITH ZHANG HONG, WITH WHOM HE WAS REFERRED TO AS THE "TWO ZHANGS."

ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE. COMMITS SUICIDE AFTER LEARNING GUAN YU WAS EXECUTED IN VOLUME 42.

ZHOU YU GONGJIN:
SWORN BROTHER OF SUN CE, AND ONE OF WU'S TOP MINDS, SERVING AS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DURING THE BATTLE OF THE RED CLIFFS. HE RECEIVES A CRITICAL ARROW-WOUND DURING HIS NANJUN CAMPAIGN (VOL. 27) WHICH HE NEVER FULLY RECOVERS FROM, LEADING TO HIS TRAGIC EARLY DEATH IN VOLUME 30.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING:
MASTERFUL STRATEGIST AND FORMER STUDENT OF SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 21, HE YIELDS TO LIU BEI'S PERSISTENCE AND DECIDES TO BECOME HIS SUBJECT.

SANGOKUSHI (ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志

VOLUME 59
AUTUMN WINDS OF WUZHANG

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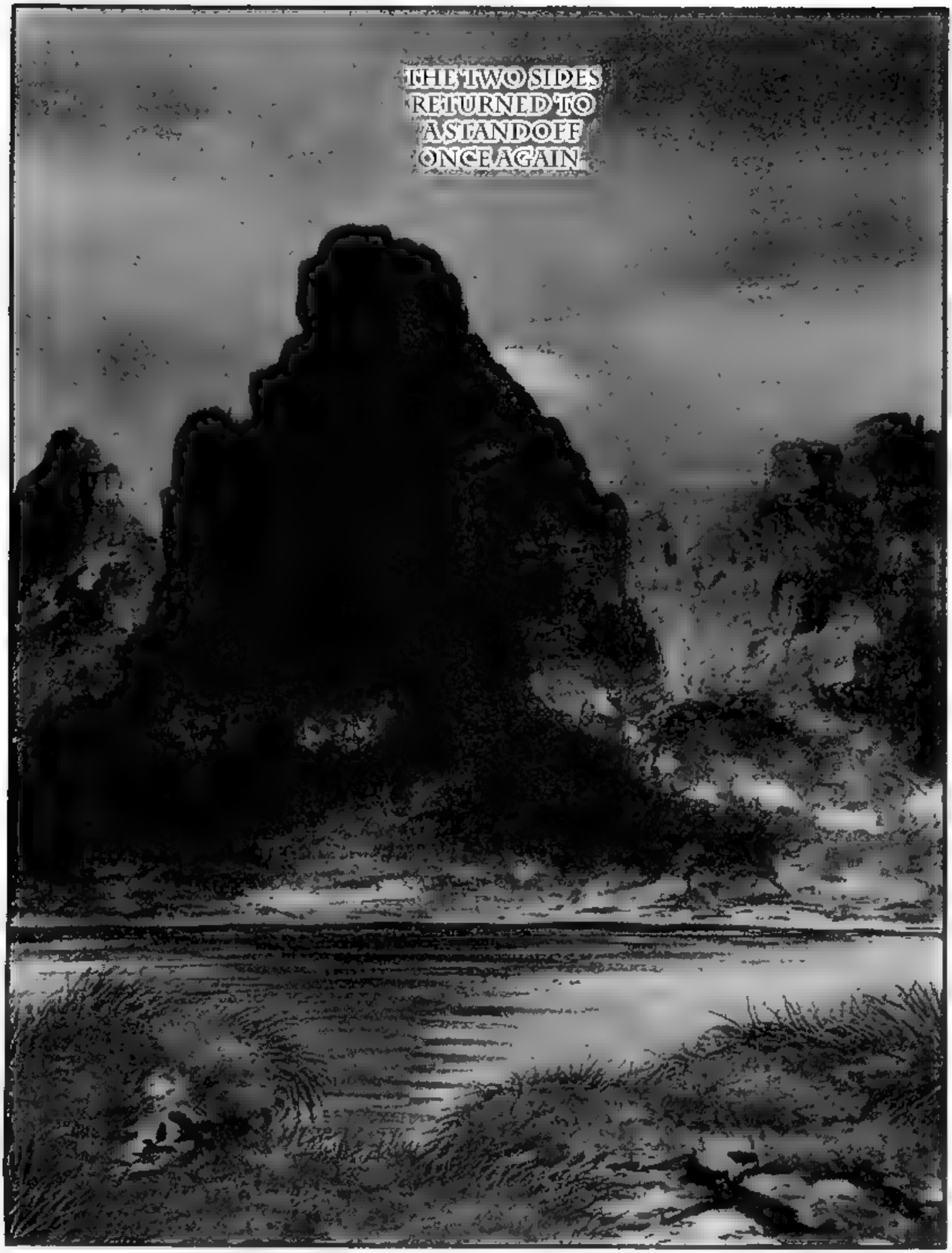
（月刊『ビッグコミックオリジナル』掲載）

50 STRIKES



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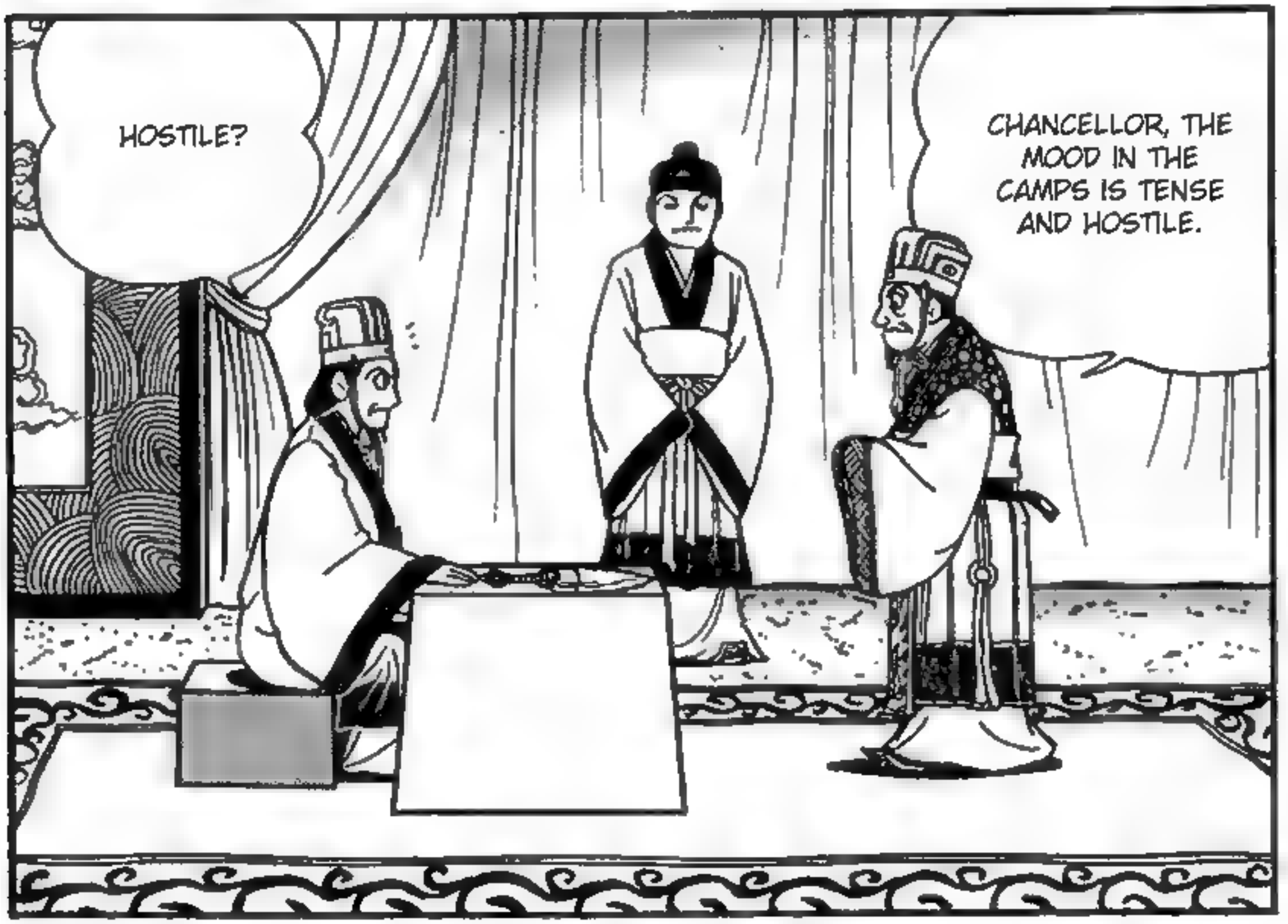
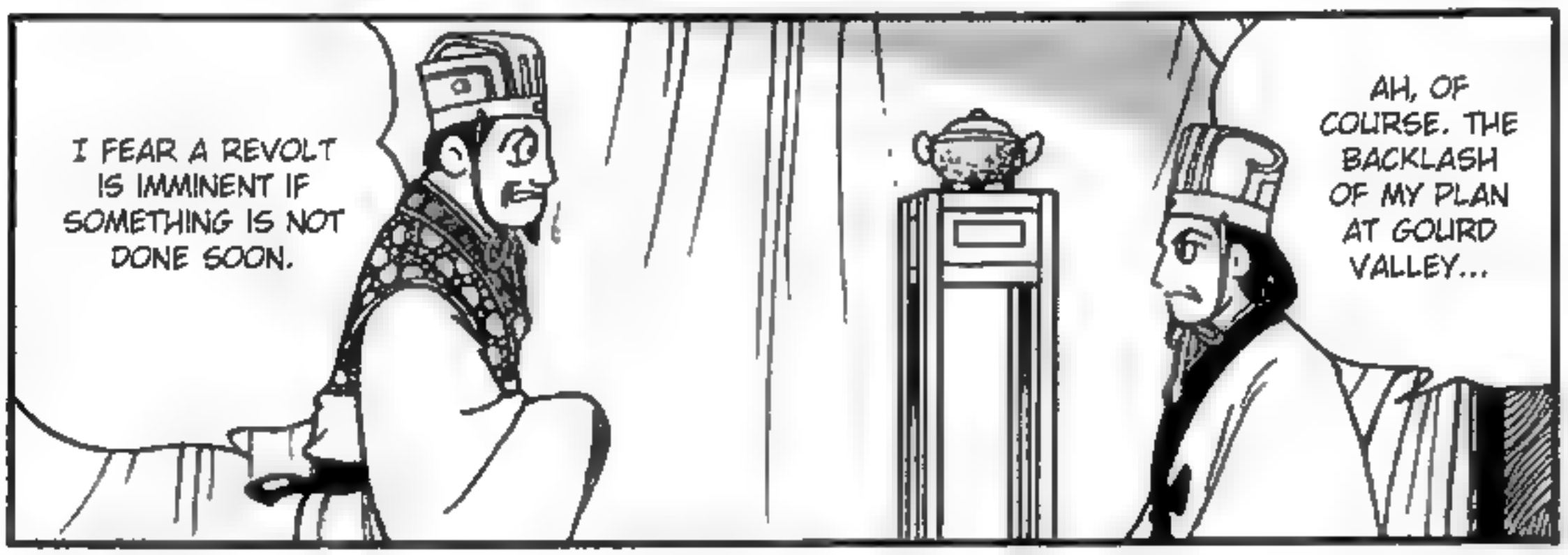
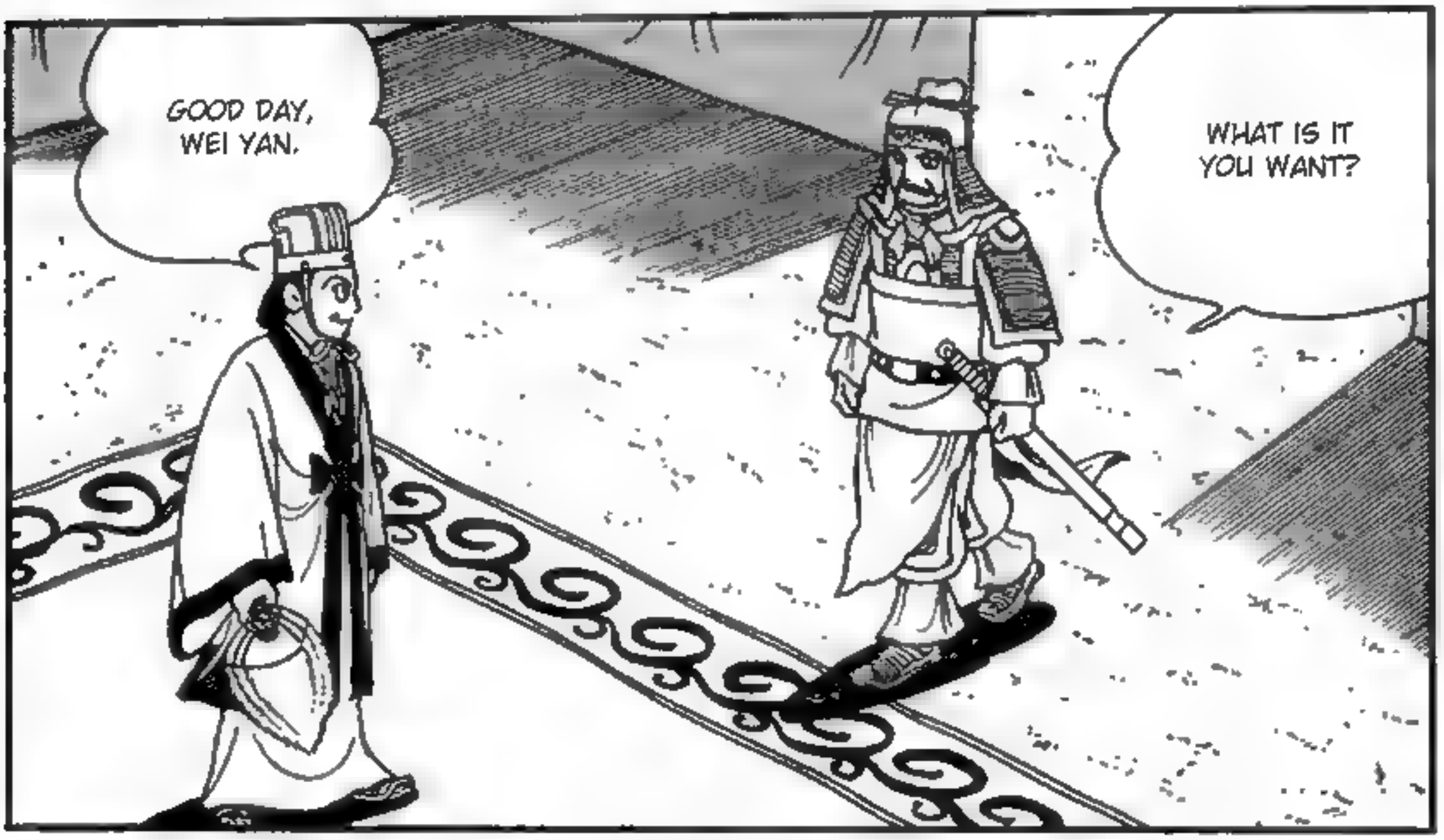

HOSTILE?
CHANCELLOR, THE MOOD IN THE CAMPS IS TENSE AND HOSTILE.

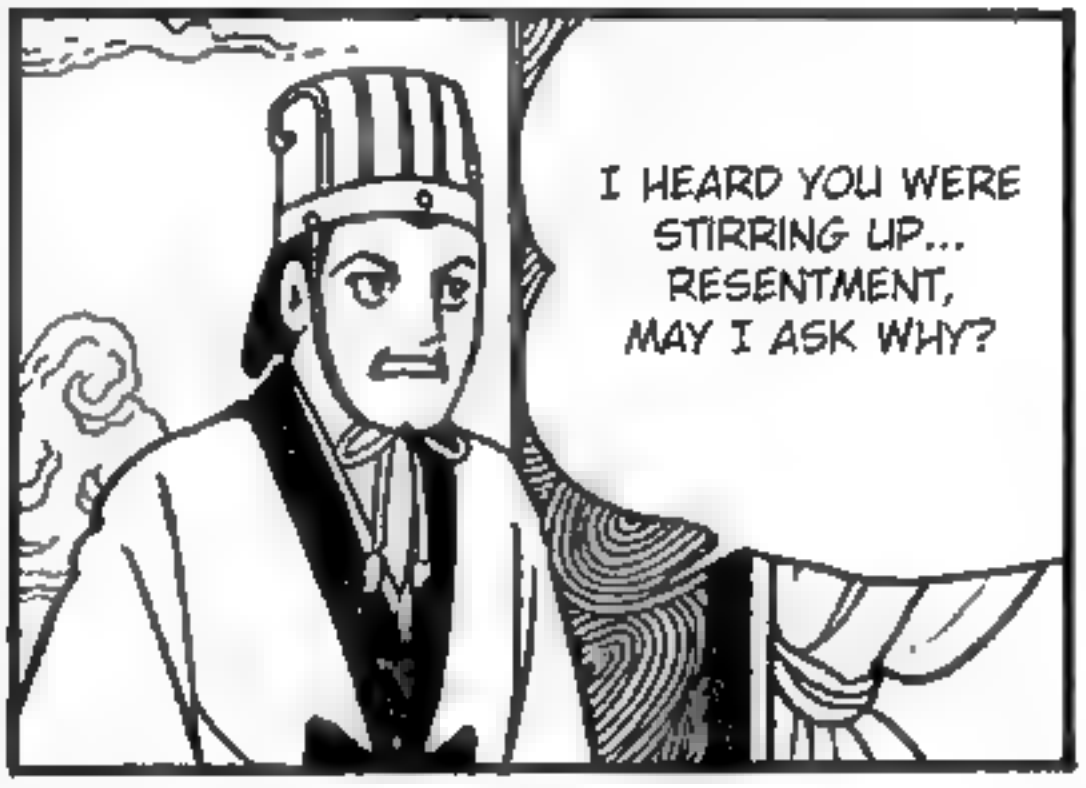
YES, WEI YAN IS LOUDLY STIRRING UP RESENTMENT.


I FEAR A REVOLT IS IMMINENT IF SOMETHING IS NOT DONE SOON.
AH, OF COURSE. THE BACKLASH OF MY PLAN AT GOURD VALLEY...
YES, SIR.
YOU'RE RIGHT. BRING WEI YAN HERE AT ONCE.

.....


GOOD DAY, WEI YAN.
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?

OH, YOU KNOW *DAMN WELL WHY.*


I HEARD YOU WERE STIRRING UP... RESENTMENT, MAY I ASK WHY?

FINE, THEN I'LL SAY IT.

NO, I'M AFRAID I DO NOT.

YES, OF COURSE.

BACK IN THE LAST BATTLE, YOU ORDERED ME TO LURE SIMA YI TO THE CAMP AT GOURD VALLEY, REMEMBER?

AHH, SO THAT IS THE CAUSE FOR YOUR RAGE.

YOU USED ME AS AN EXPENDABLE PIECE TO LURE SIMA YI! NO, TO PUT IT MORE ACCURATELY, IT WAS YOUR GOAL TO KILL BOTH ME AND SIMA YI IN THAT LAST BATTLE!

IF IT WEREN'T FOR THAT FREAK RAIN STORM, I WOULD'VE BEEN BURNED TO CRISPS ALONG WITH SIMA YI AND HIS SON!

THIS IS OUTRA-GEOUS!

YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT THAT'S WHY I'M FURIOUS! WHAT MAN WOULDN'T BE ANGRY AFTER HIS OWN SIDE TRIED TO KILL HIM!?

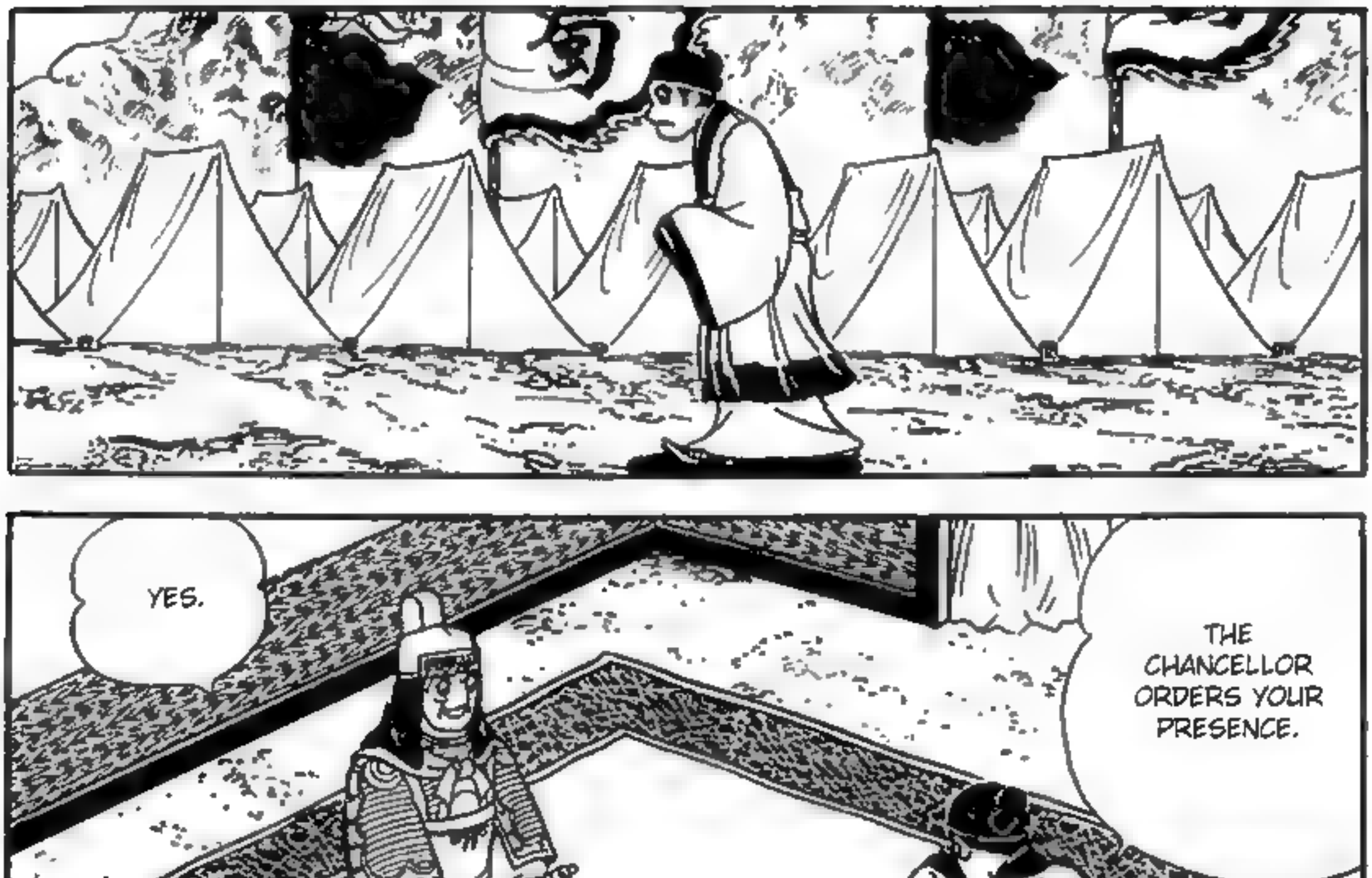
NO, I WAS REFERRING TO WHAT MA DAI DID.

OUTRAGEOUS!? I'M THE ONE WHO'S BEING OUTRAGEOUS HERE!?

YES, SIR.

CALL MA DAI AT ONCE!

I GAVE SPECIFIC ORDERS FOR MA DAI TO TAKE CARE IN STARTING THE FIRE SO THAT OUR OWN TROOPS WOULD NOT BE HARMED!


YES.
THE CHANCELLOR ORDERS YOUR PRESENCE.

I WONDER IF HE'S COME UP WITH A NEW PLAN ALREADY?

MA DAI! HOW DARE YOU DEFY MY ORDERS!

I AM HERE, CHANCELLOR.

I TOLD YOU TO TAKE UTMOST CAUTION SO THAT OUR OWN TROOPS WOULD NOT BE CAUGHT IN THE FIRE TRAP!

WHA?

BUT WEI YAN AND HIS TROOPS WERE STILL IN GOURD VALLEY WHEN YOU STARTED THE FIRE!

F-FIFTY!?

YOU ARE HEREBY STRIPPED OF YOUR RANK AND SENTENCED TO 50 STRIKES WITH WOODEN STICKS!

WE ARE ONLY FOLLOWING ORDERS, SIR.

Y-YES, SIR.

CARRY OUT THE SENTENCE AT ONCE!

BEGIN!

TWO!
THREE!

MNF!

ONE!

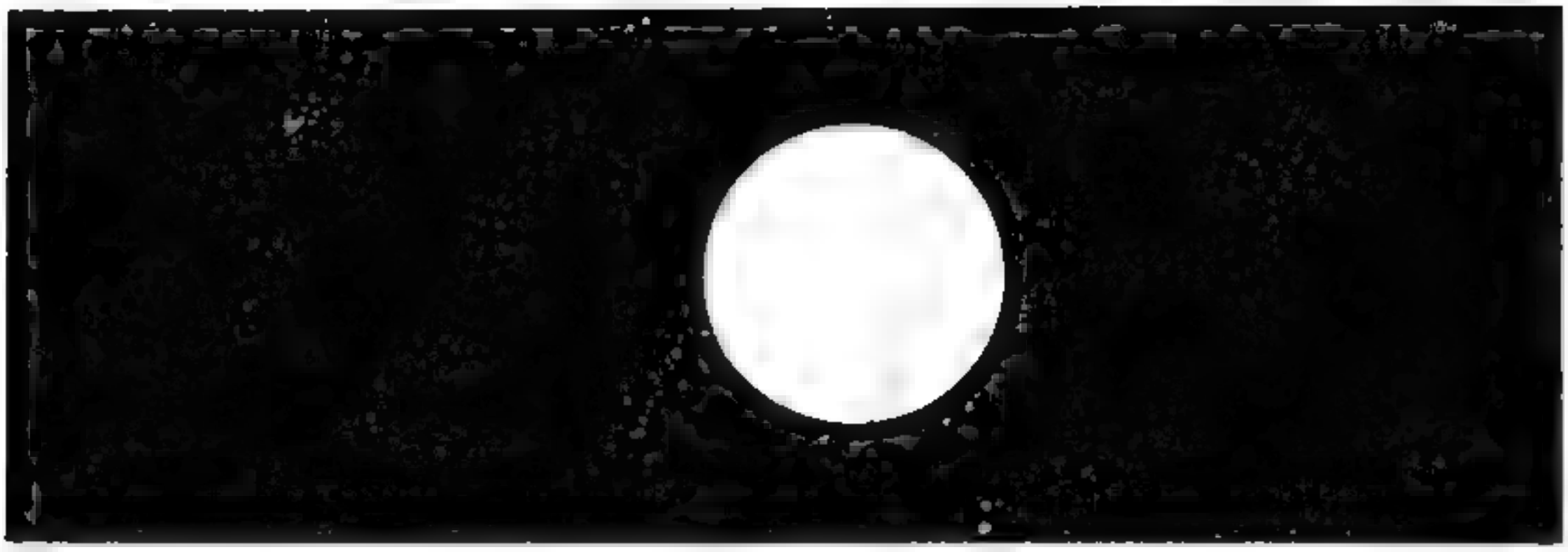
24!
25!

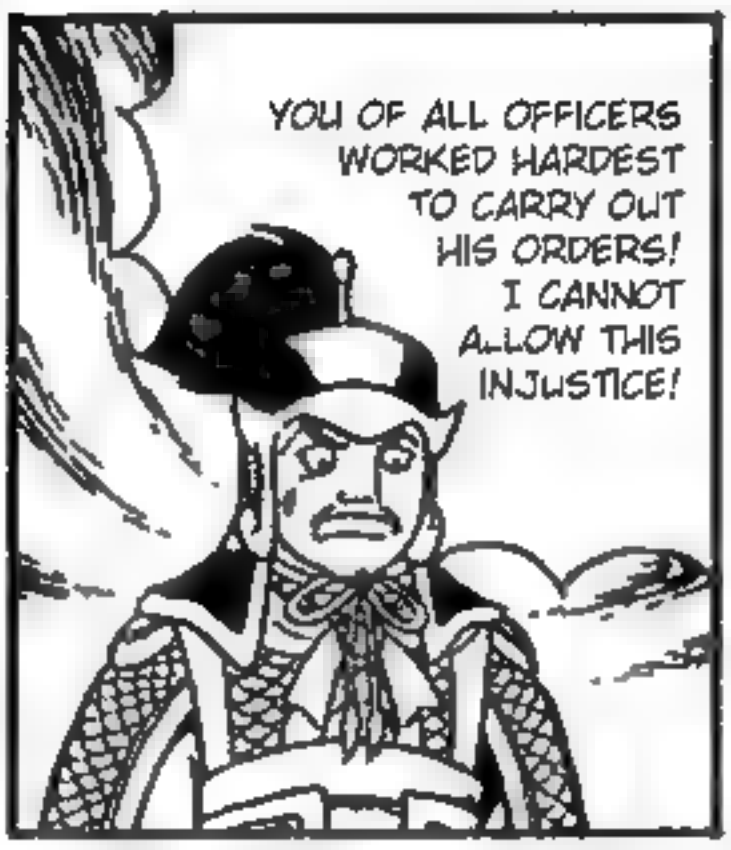
50!

40!
41!
42!

TAKE HIM AWAY!

I HOPE THIS WILL HELP ASSUAGE YOUR UNDERSTANDABLE ANGER, WEI YAN.

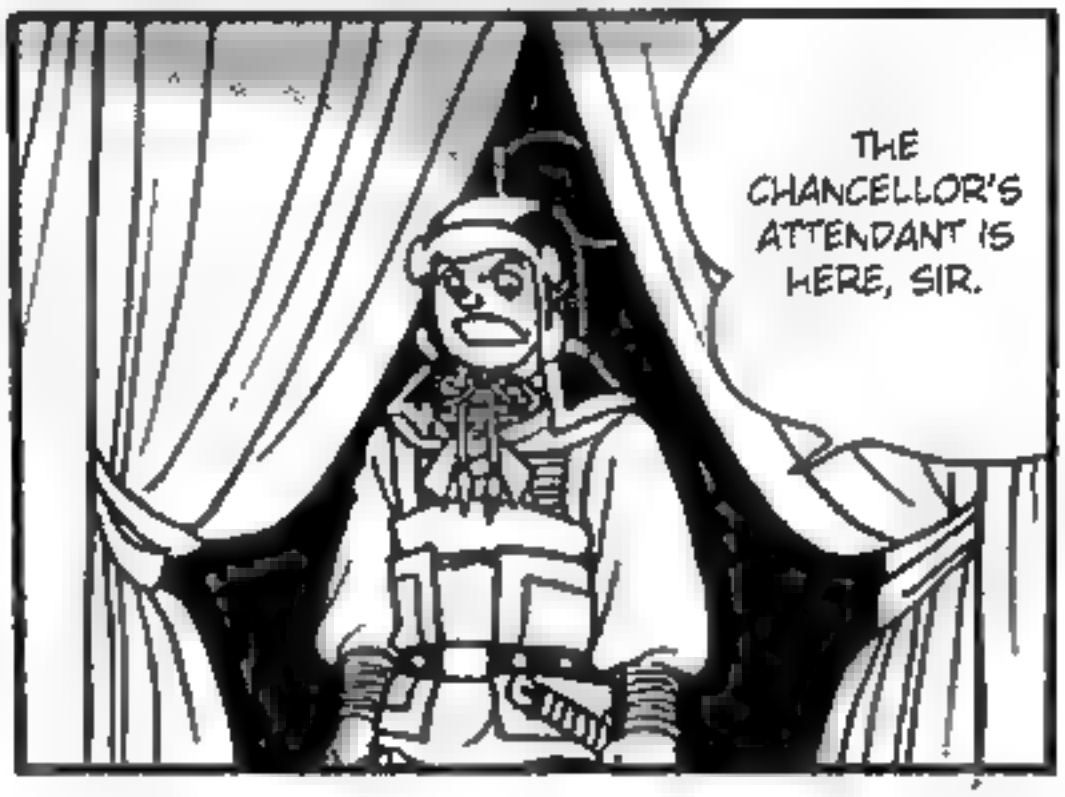



YOU OF ALL OFFICERS WORKED HARDEST TO CARRY OUT HIS ORDERS! I CANNOT ALLOW THIS INJUSTICE!

WATCH YOUR TONGUE! SOMEONE MIGHT HEAR!

I TOO CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE CHANCELLOR'S ACTIONS, SIR.
WHY!? I CARRIED OUT THE ORDERS EXACTLY AS I WAS TOLD AND WHAT DO I GET!? A PUBLIC BEATING AND MY RANK AS A GENERAL STRIPPED FROM ME!

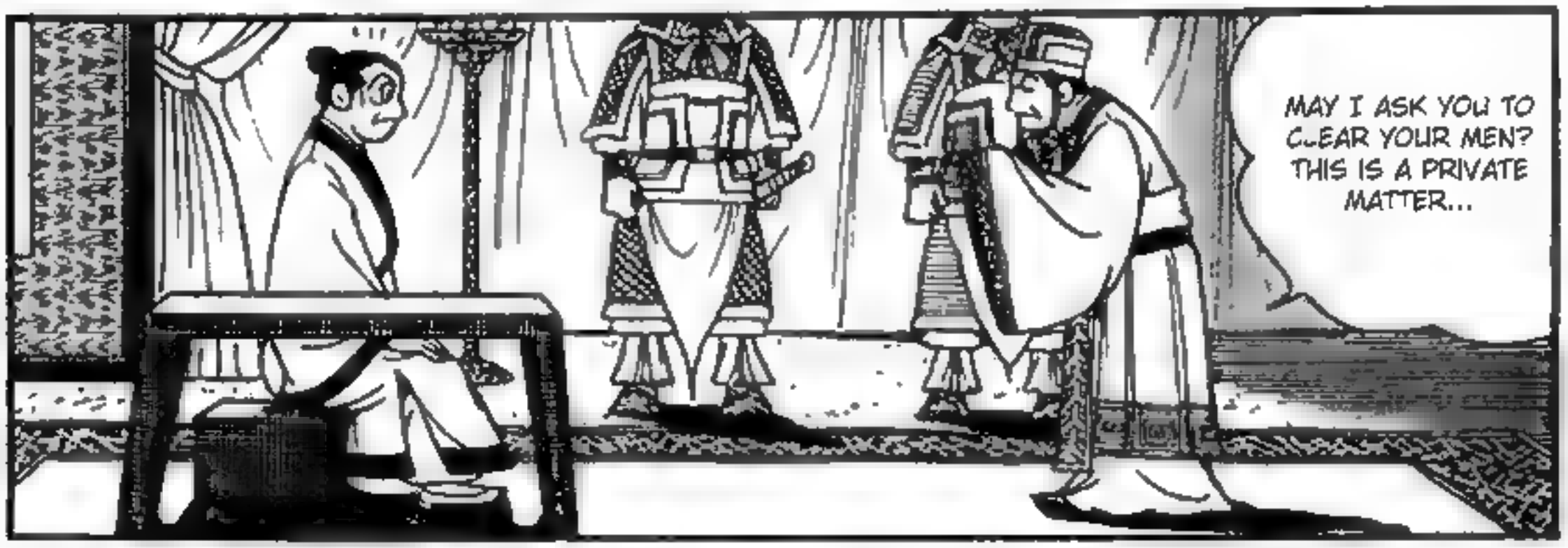
HIS ATTENDANT!?


THE CHANCELLOR'S ATTENDANT IS HERE, SIR.

LET HIM IN.

SO WHY HAVE YOU COME!? WAS MY PUBLIC BEATING AND DEMOTION NOT ENOUGH!? HAVE YOU COME FOR MY HEAD AS WELL!?

GOOD EVENING, I AM FAN JIAN.


MAY I ASK YOU TO CLEAR YOUR MEN? THIS IS A PRIVATE MATTER...

YES, SIR.

FINE. LEAVE US ALONE!

HE'S THE ONE WHO PUT ME THROUGH THIS!

THE CHANCELLOR REGRETS WHAT TRANSPIRED TODAY.

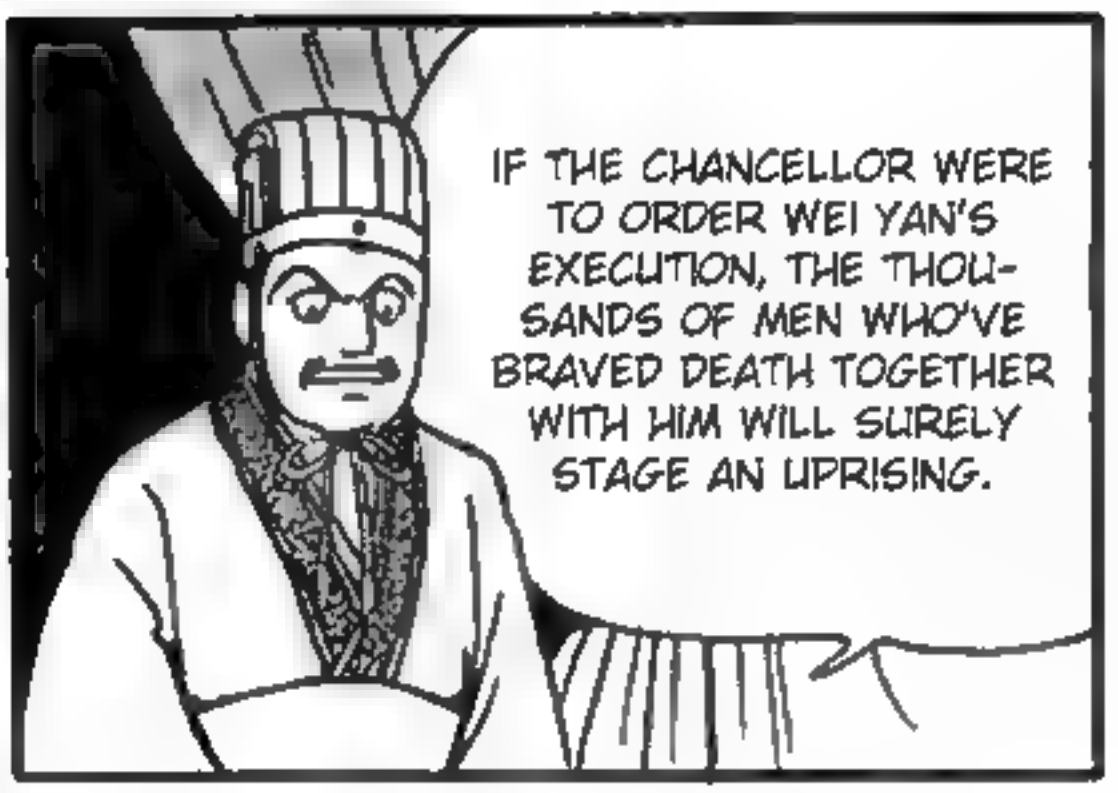
WHAT!?

THE TRUTH IS, HE PLANNED TO SECRETLY ELIMINATE WEI YAN ALONG WITH SIMA YI IN THE LAST BATTLE.

YES, I AM AWARE OF THAT.

AS YOU MAY KNOW, WEI YAN HAS BEEN STIRRING UP RESENTMENT TOWARDS THE CHANCELLOR'S COMMAND AND BUILDING UP HIS OWN LOYAL SUPPORT BAE.

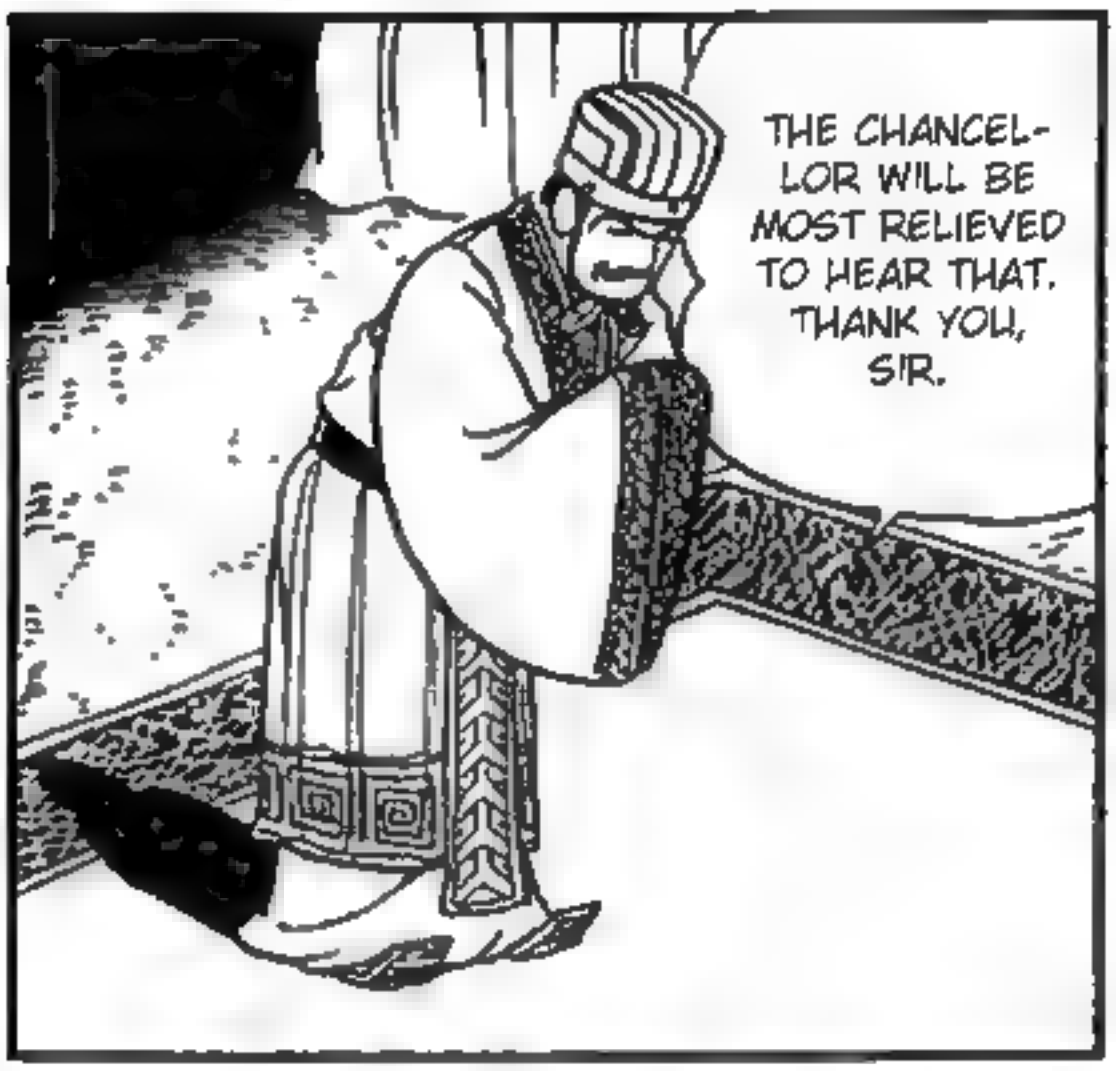
HMM...

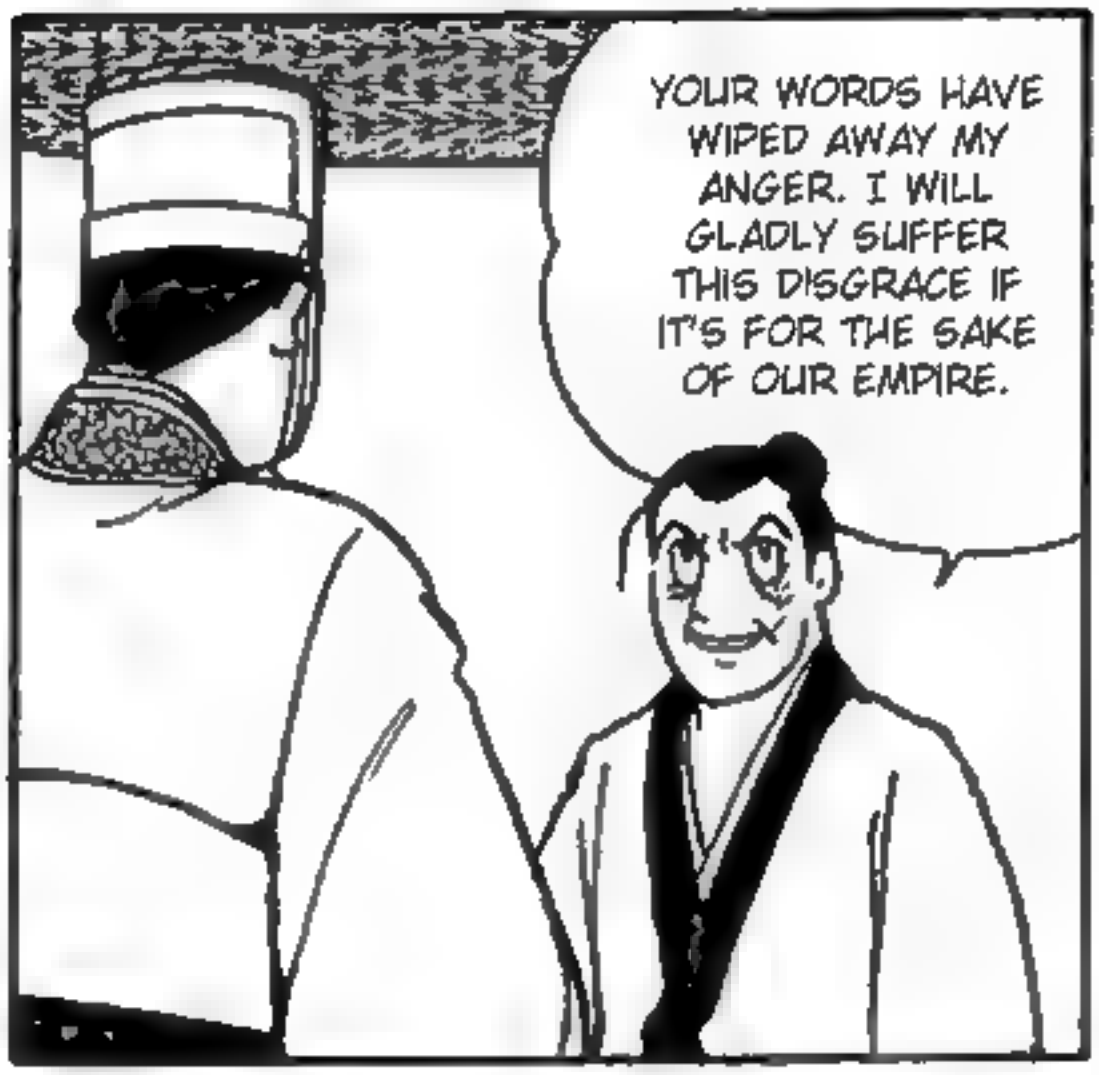

IF THE CHANCELLOR WERE TO ORDER WEI YAN'S EXECUTION, THE THOU-SANDS OF MEN WHO'VE BRAVED DEATH TOGETHER WITH HIM WILL SURELY STAGE AN UPRISING.

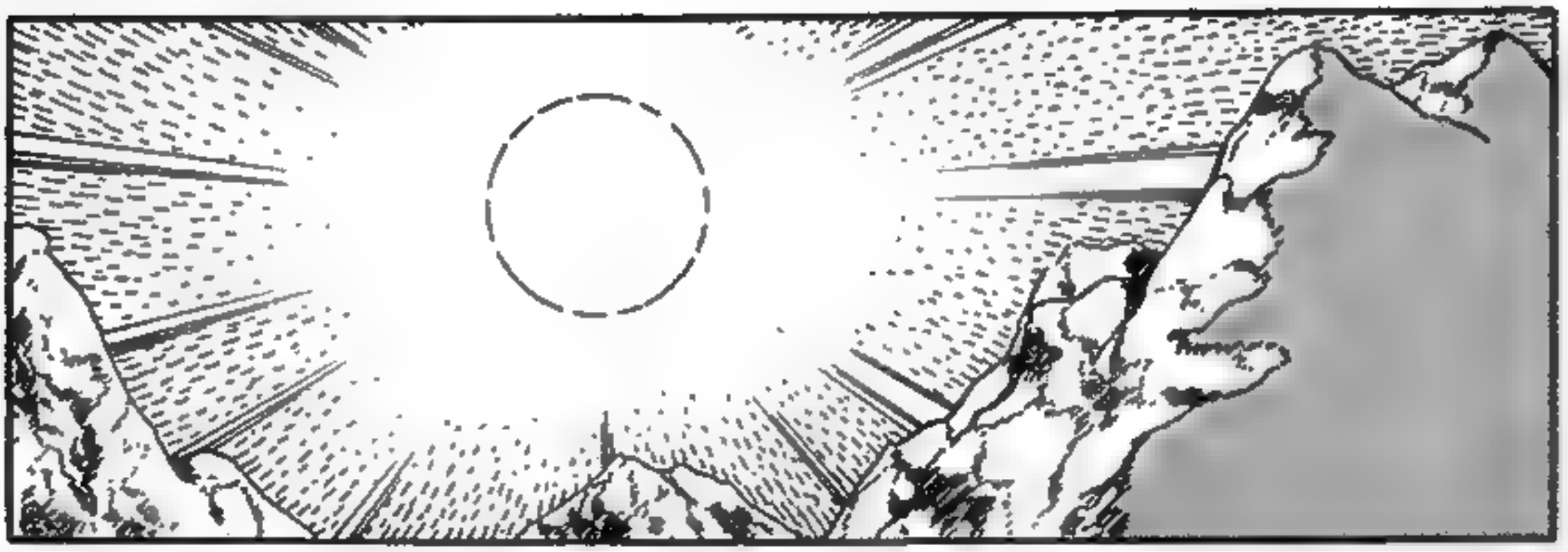
HE SENT ME HERE TO EXPLAIN ALL THIS TO YOU. ALTHOUGH THE INJUSTICE IN YOUR DISGRACEFUL PUNISHMENT IS UNDOUBTABLE, HE ASKS YOU TO BEAR WITH IT FOR THE GOOD OF THE EMPIRE. HE PROMISES THAT HE WILL REPAY YOU 100 TIMES OVER AND WIPE AWAY YOUR DISGRACE ALL IN DUE TIME.

IF WEI YAN WERE TO REBEL NOW, THEN OUR ENTIRE ARMY MAY CRUMBLE. THAT IS WHY THE CHANCELLOR FELT HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO SHIFT THE BLAME ONTO YOU IN ORDER TO AT LEAST NOMINALLY BUY WEI YAN'S LOYALTY A LITTLE LONGER...

I NARROW-MINDEDLY NEVER CONSIDERED HOW DIFFICULT THE CHANCELLOR'S OWN POSITION WAS...


THE CHANCEL-
LOR WILL BE
MOST RELIEVED
TO HEAR THAT.
THANK YOU,
SIR.


YOUR WORDS HAVE
WIPED AWAY MY
ANGER. I WILL
GLADLY SUFFER
THIS DISGRACE IF
IT'S FOR THE SAKE
OF OUR EMPIRE.



I'D LIKE TO MAKE MA DAI MY ATTENDANT NOW THAT HIS RANK IS THAT OF A COMMON SOLDIER.

YES?
I HAVE A REQUEST, CHANCELLOR.

WHY NOT? MA DAI IS STILL A MAN WITH CONSIDERABLE SKILL, DESPITE HIS DEMOTION. I'D LIKE TO MAKE GOOD USE OF HIM.

NO, I DON'T THINK THAT WOULD BE GOOD.

OH, SO DID YOU INTEND ALL ALONG FOR HIS DEMOTION TO ONLY BE A TEMPORARY ONE...?

THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I WISH TO GIVE MA DAI A CHANCE TO REDEEM HIMSELF.

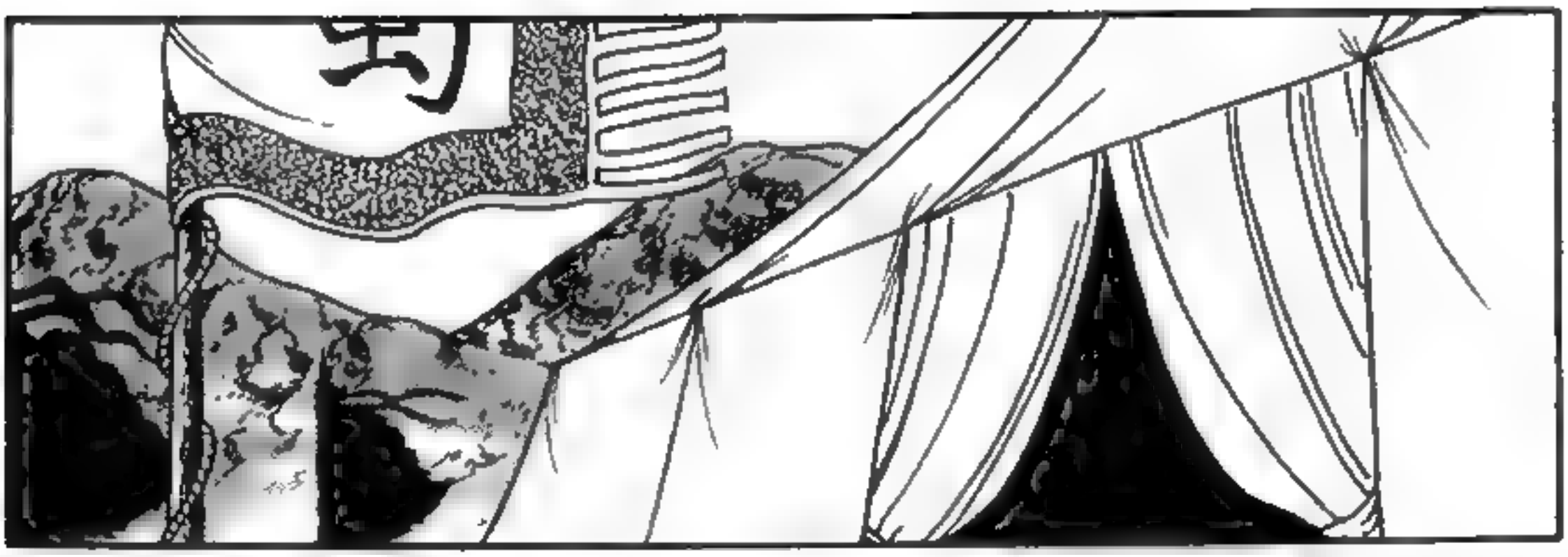
MOREOVER, YOU MUST UNDERSTAND MA DAI HAS HIS OWN PRIDE AS WELL. HE MIGHT NOT TAKE BECOMING YOUR ATTENDANT SO WELL.

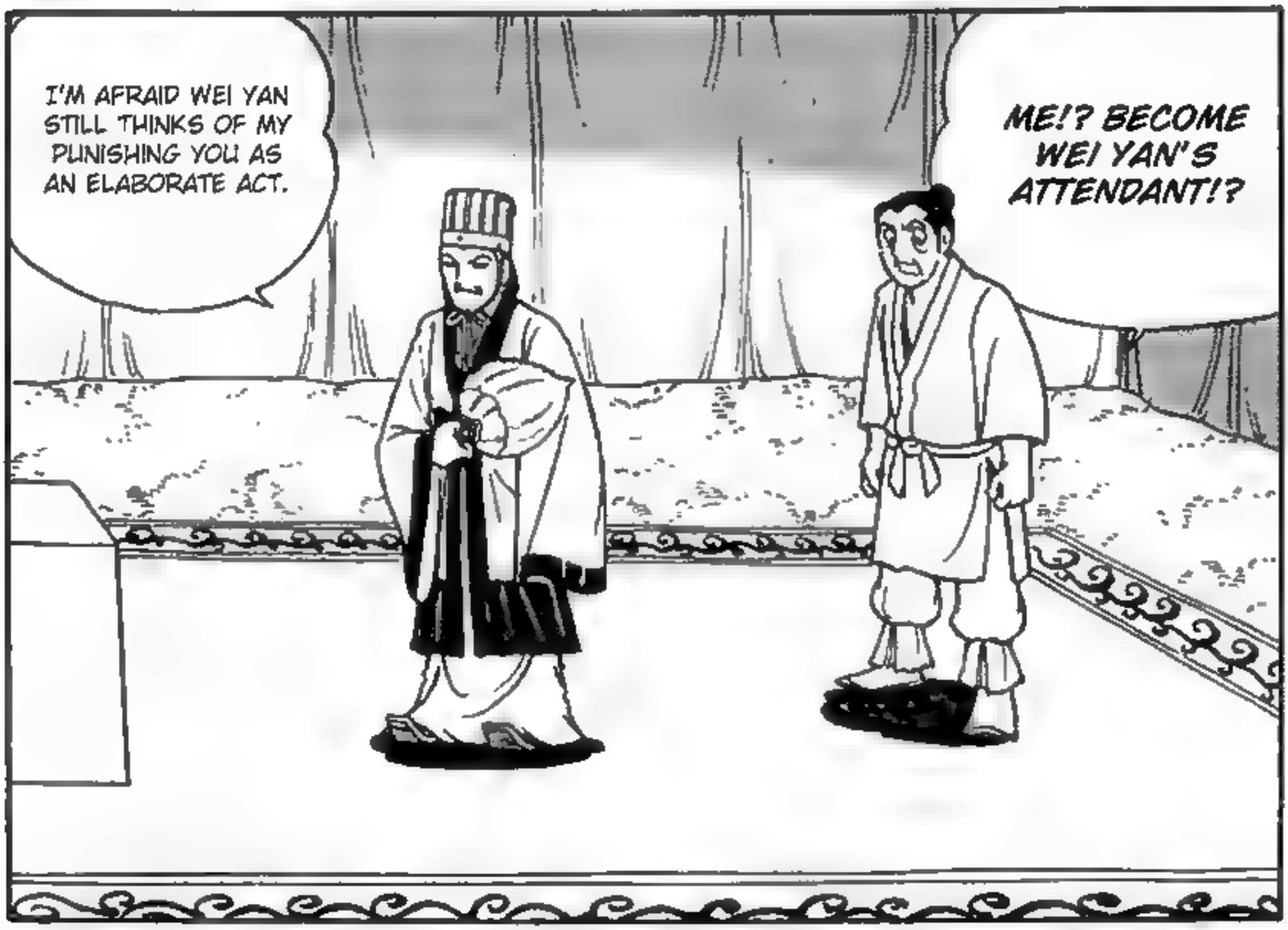
NO, BUT THERE IS NO USE IN WASTING HIS TALENTS EITHER.

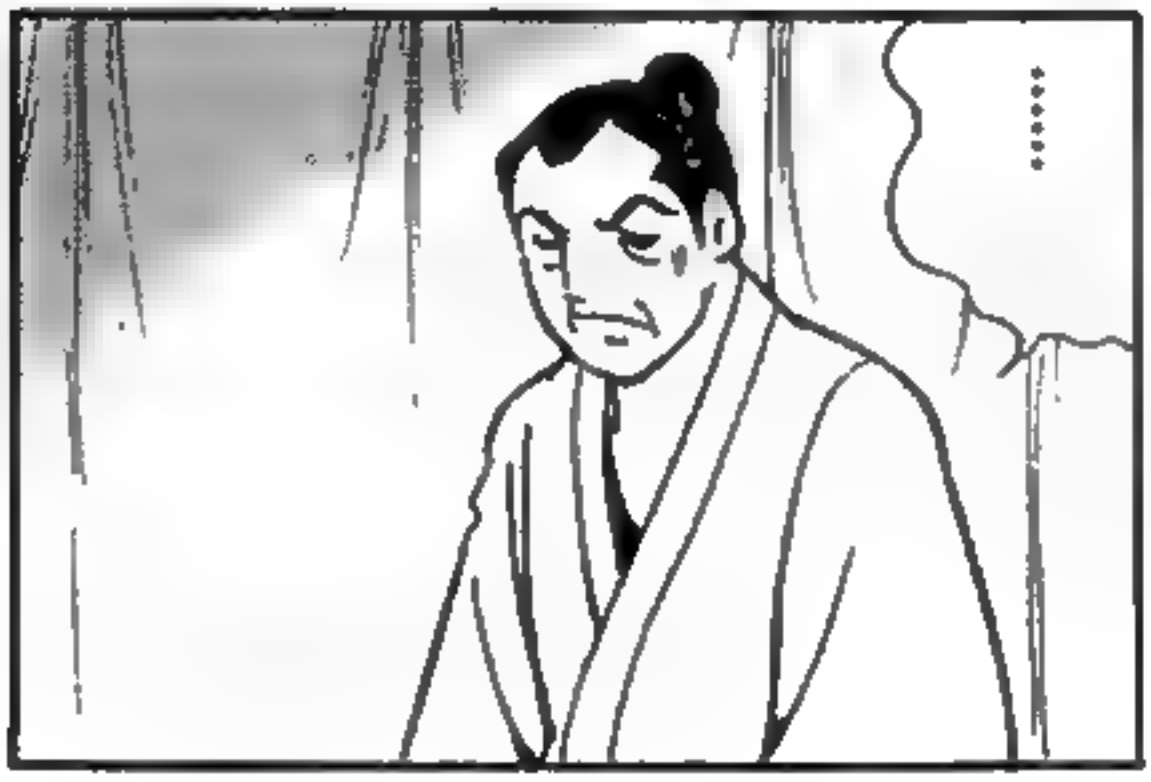
AH, OF COURSE. THEN I WILL EAGERLY AWAIT YOUR FINAL JUDGMENT

I JUST WANT TO BE IMPARTIAL BY ALSO ASKING FOR HIS OPINION ON THIS MATTER BEFORE DECIDING.

IT SEEMS TO ME YOU CARE AN AWFUL LOT FOR MA DAI, CHANCELLOR...




I'M AFRAID WEI YAN STILL THINKS OF MY PUNISHING YOU AS AN ELABORATE ACT.
ME!? BECOME WEI YAN'S ATTENDANT!?



HE IS MAKING THIS FORCEFUL REQUEST TO CONFIRM HIS SUSPICIONS...

YOU WILL!?

VERY WELL, I WILL BECOME HIS ATTENDANT THEN.

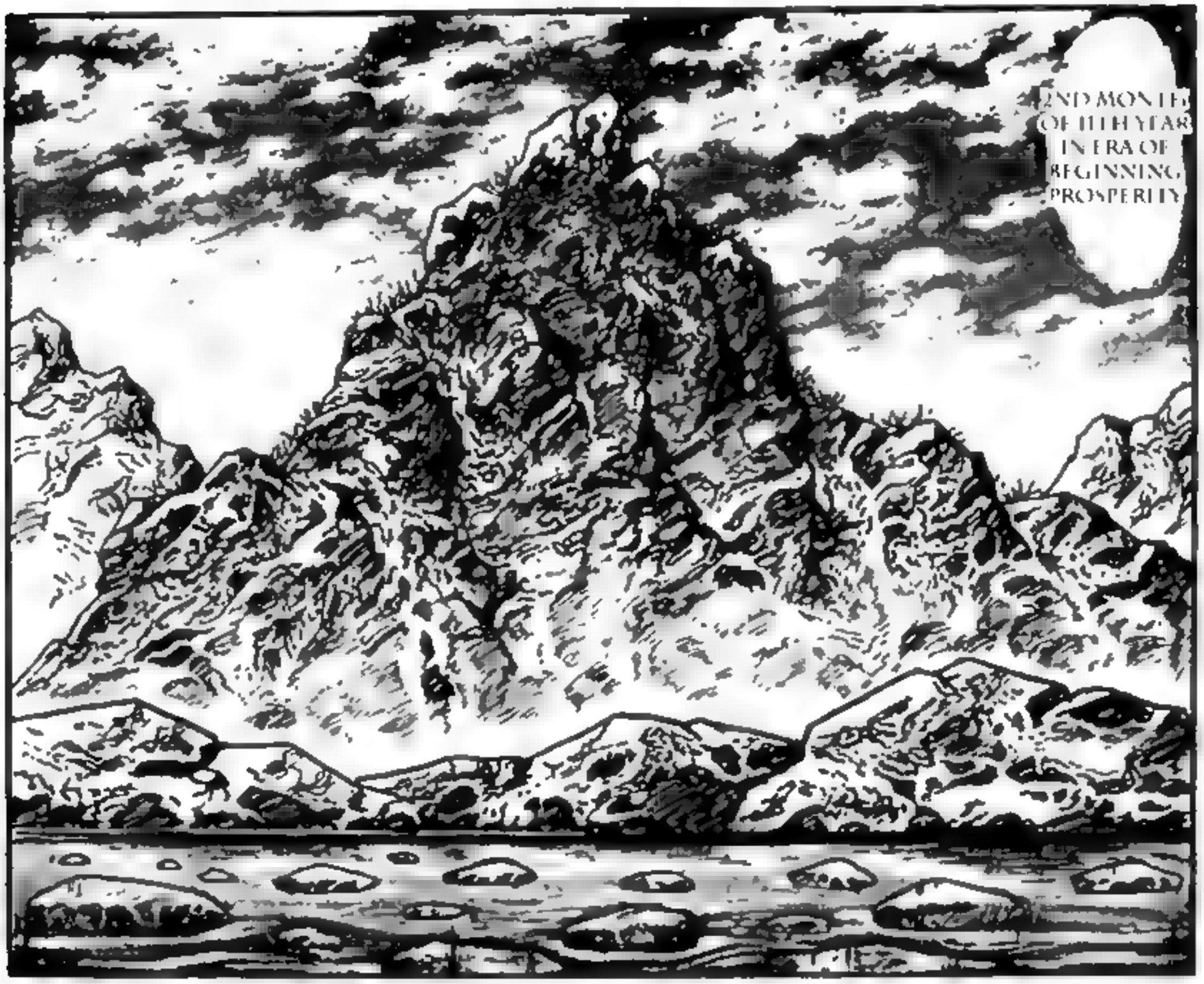
BY BECOMING HIS ATTENDANT, I CAN KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON WEI YAN TO SEE THAT HE DOES NOT START A REVOLT.

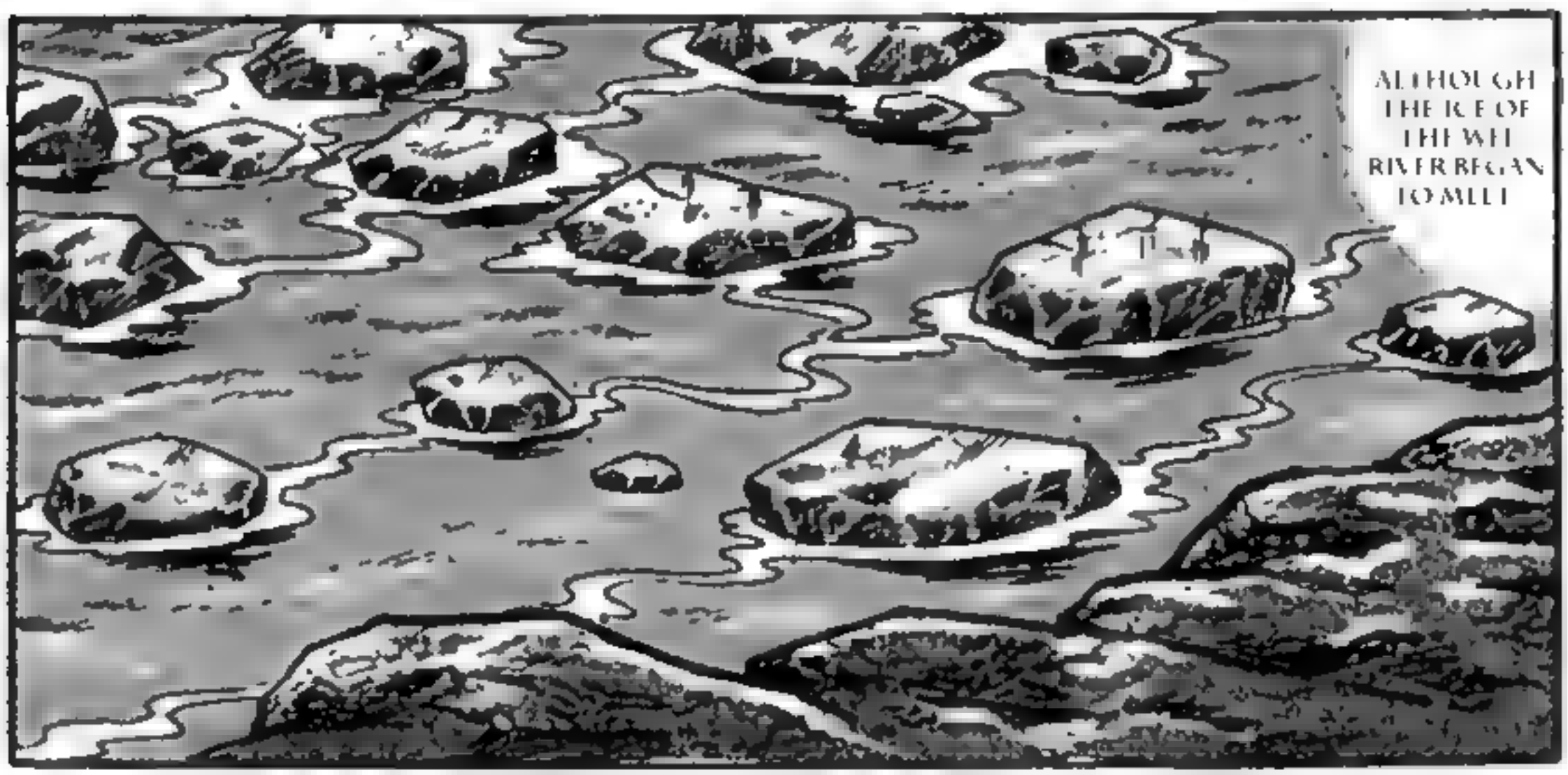
TO SUFFER ANOTHER ACT OF DISGRACE IS TRIVIAL IF IT IS FOR THE GOOD OF THE WHOLE EMPIRE.

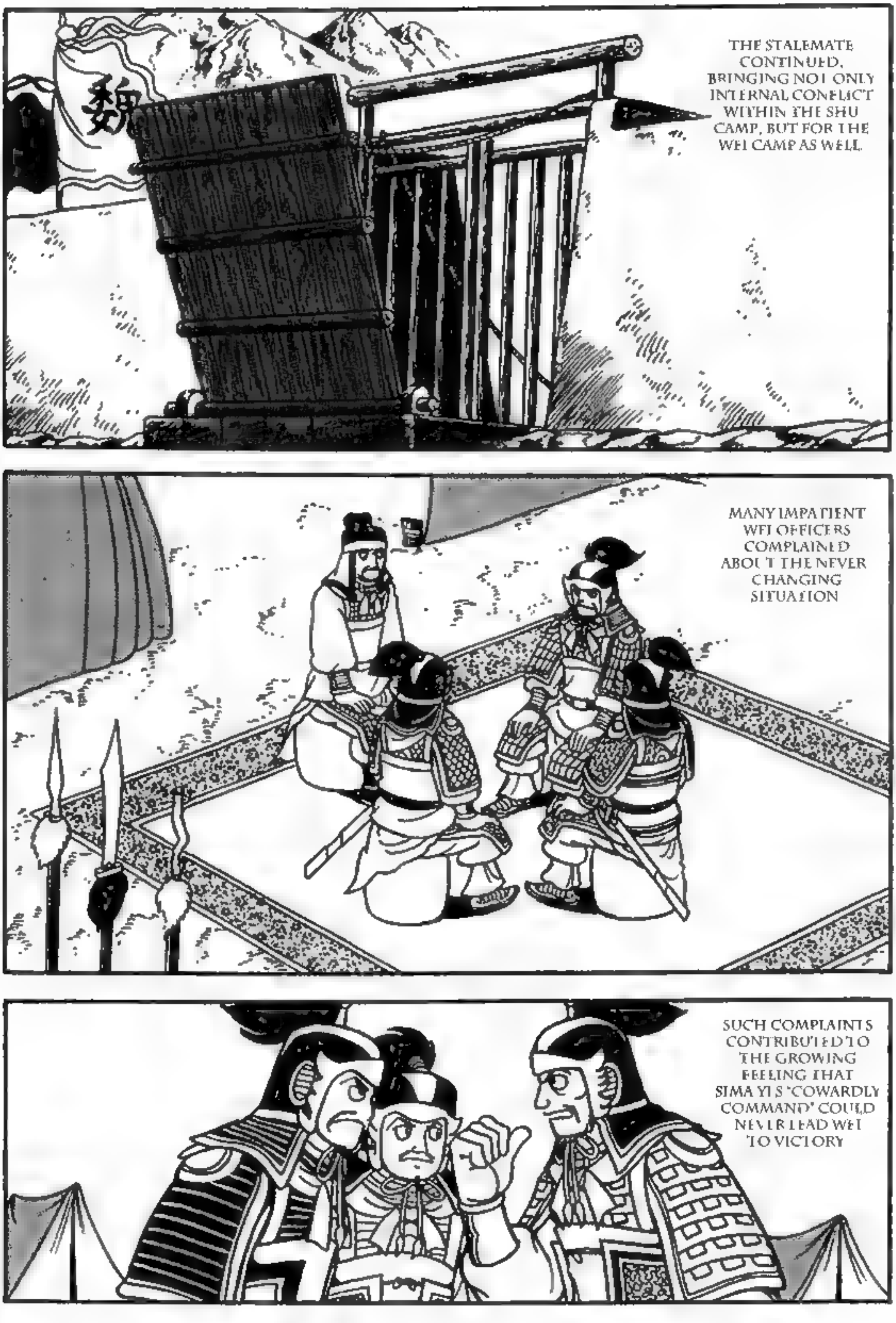
I UNDERSTAND VERY WELL THAT I AM NOT THE ONLY ONE SUFFERING HERE, SIR...

FORGIVE ME, MA DAI...

WOMAN'S DRESS






THE STALEMATE CONTINUED, BRINGING NOT ONLY INTERNAL CONFLICT WITHIN THE SHU CAMP, BUT FOR THE WEI CAMP AS WELL.
MANY IMPATIENT WEI OFFICERS COMPLAINED ABOUT THE NEVER CHANGING SITUATION
SUCH COMPLAINTS CONTRIBUTED TO THE GROWING FEELING THAT SIMA YI'S "COWARDLY COMMAND" COULD NEVER LEAD WEI TO VICTORY

THE ENEMIES ARE SWITCHING CAMPS.

YES, GUO HUAI?

COMMANDER.

ARE THEY MOVING EAST OR WEST!?

WUZHANG PLAINS!?

THEY APPEAR TO BE HEADING WEST TOWARDS WUZHANG PLAINS.

HAD THEY MOVED EAST TO WUGONG, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN IN DANGER.

HM?

THAT GIVES US SOME BREATHING SPACE.

IF THE ENEMIES WENT TO WUGONG, THAT MEANS KONGMING IS PLANNING TO GAMBLE ON AN ALL-OR-NOTHING BATTLE.

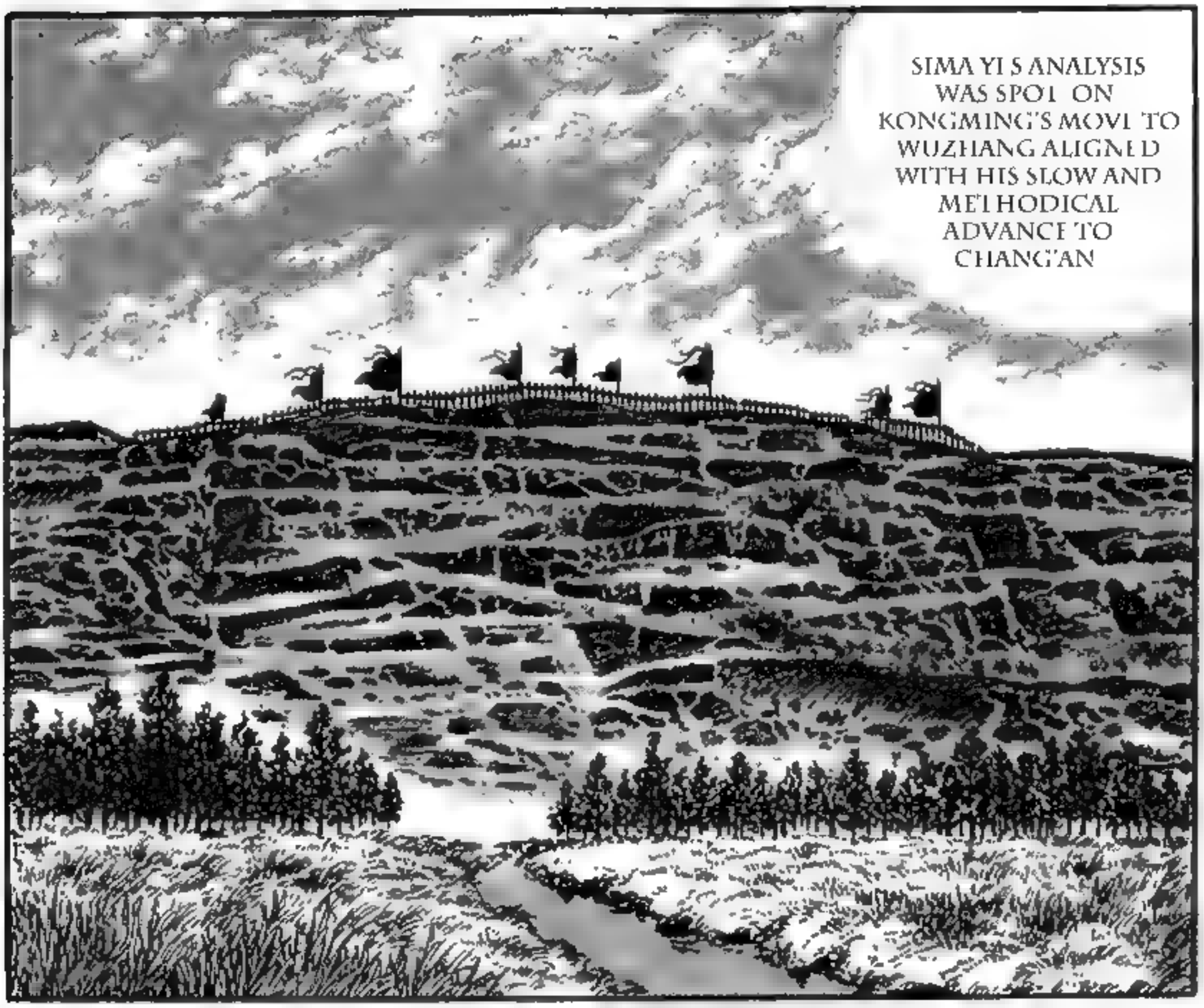
I'M AFRAID I DO NOT UNDERSTAND, COMMANDER. WHY IS WUZHANG TO OUR ADVANTAGE WHILE WUGONG IS NOT?

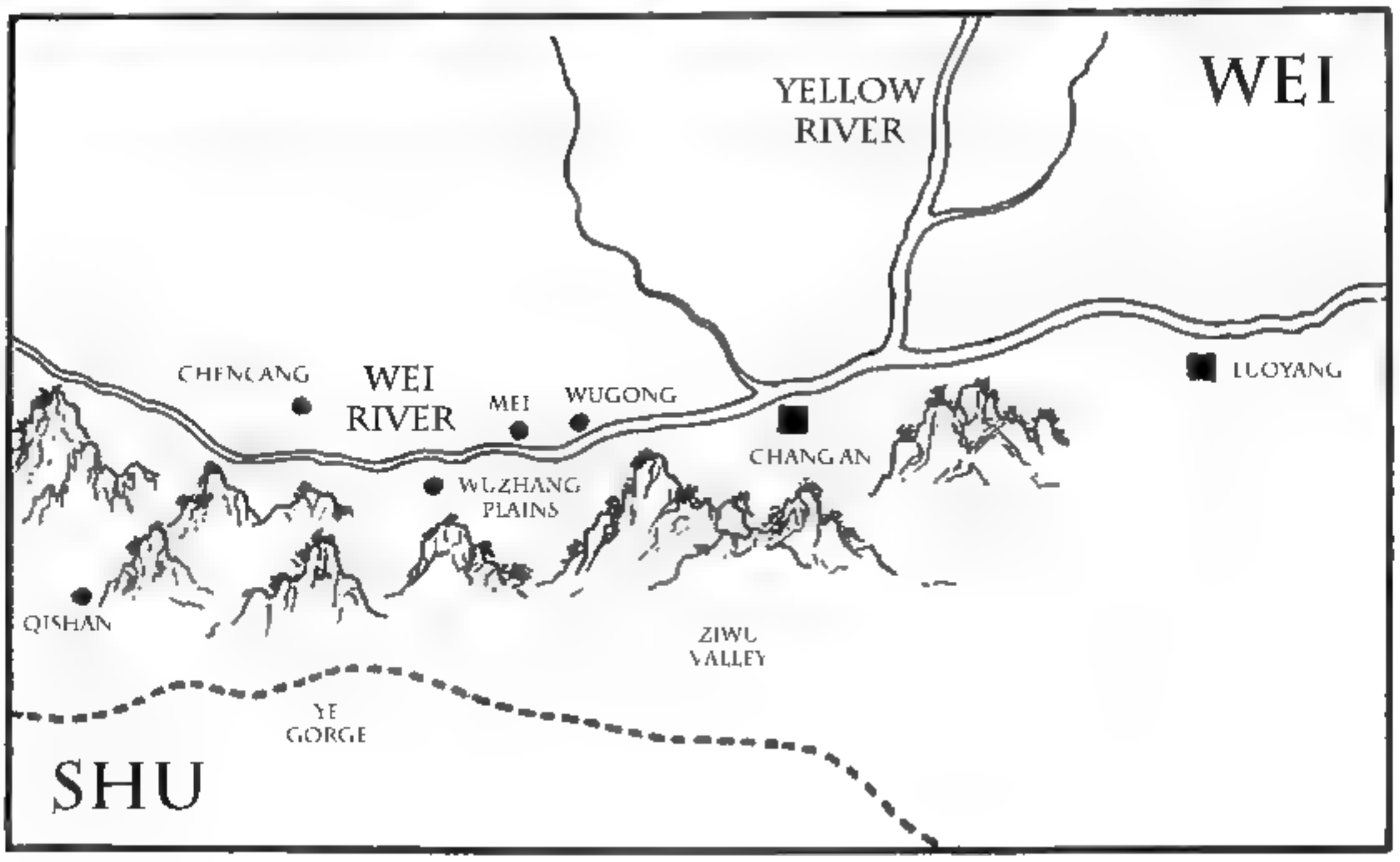
WE CAN SUCCESSFULLY DEFEND ANY ATTACKS FROM THERE JUST AS WE'VE BEEN DOING ALL ALONG.

AND WHAT ABOUT WUZHANG PLAINS?

SUCH A BATTLE WILL BE EXTREMELY RISKY FOR BOTH SIDES, AND I AM NOT CONFIDENT WE COULD WIN THAT BATTLE WITH OUR CURRENT SITUATION.

AS USUAL, KONGMING IS TAKING THE CAUTIOUS BUT SLOWER APPROACH BY MOVING TO WUZHANG.


SIMA YI S ANALYSIS
WAS SPOT ON
KONGMING'S MOVI TO
WUZHANG ALIGNED
WITH HIS SLOW AND
METHODICAL
ADVANCE TO
CHANG'AN


WEI
YELLOW
RIVER
LUOYANG
CHENCANG
WEI
RIVER
MEI
WUGONG
CHANG'AN
WUZHANG
PLAINS
QISHAN
ZIWU
VALLEY
YE
GORGE
SHU

THE CHANCELLOR OF SHU SENDS ME AS HIS ENVOY TO THE WEI COMMANDER, SIMA YI!

HALT! IDENTIFY YOURSELVES!

YES, SIR.

LET HIM IN.

A SHU ENVOY?

THANK YOU.

FOLLOW ME. I'LL LEAD YOU TO THE COMMANDER.

I WONDER WHY HE'S COME...

THAT'S THE SHU ENVOY.

秦女
秦女
OH, DID HE?
THE CHANCELLOR ASKED ME TO BRING THIS GIFT AND LETTER TO YOU, SIR.

HM!?

WHAT HAS HE SENT...?

*GUANZI 7TH CENTURY B.C. POLITICAL/PHILIOSOPHICAL TREATISE WRITTEN BY GUAN ZHONG

A WOMAN'S DRESS AND ACCESSO-RIES?
"THESE PRINCIPLES ARE EQUALLY VALID FOR A COMMANDER LEADING TROOPS AND WAGING WAR. NOW ALTHOUGH YOU LEAD AN ENORMOUS FORCE, YOU ARE CONTENT TO COWARDLY HIDE IN YOUR HOLE, FAR FROM ARROWS AND BLADES. AS YOUR ACTIONS ARE INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THAT OF A WOMAN, I SEND YOU A WOMAN'S DRESS AND ACCOMPANYING ACCESSORIES. IF YOU WILL NOT FIGHT, THEN ACCEPT THIS GIFT GRACIOUSLY. HOWEVER, IF YOU STILL THINK OF YOURSELF AS A MAN, REPLY BACK WITH A DATE FOR A DECISIVE BATTLE."
"THE HAN CHANCELLOR AND LORD OF WUXIANG, ZHUGE LIANG, SENDS THIS SHORT LETTER.
AS GUANZI STATES, THERE ARE FOUR PRINCIPLES WHICH FORM THE FABRIC OF THE STATE: PROPRIETY, JUSTICE, HONESTY, AND SHAME. A STATE LACKING ANY ONE OF THESE PRINCIPLES CANNOT STAND.*"
NGHH-

BRING OUT THE WINE.

YOU'RE SERVING WINE!?

HAHAHA, KONGMING SURE HAS A TASTE FOR JOKES.

HE'S ALREADY MOCKING YOU! WHAT MAN WOULD SERVE WINE AFTER BEING INSULTED!?

OF COURSE. KONGMING WOULD ONLY LAUGH AT ME IF I WERE TO BE IGNORANT OF PROPER MANNERS WHEN DEALING WITH ENVOYS.

THANK YOU, SIR.

PLEASE, ENJOY A DRINK.

OH? I'D HAVE THOUGHT HE HAS NOTHING TO DO THESE DAYS.

OH NO, HE OVERSEES EVERYTHING, INCLUDING PERSONALLY JUDGING CASES THAT REQUIRE AT LEAST A PUNISHMENT OF A 20-STRIKE BEATING.

THE CHANCELLOR RISES EARLY AND SLEEPS LATER THAN ANYONE.

BY THE WAY, WHAT HAS KONGMING BEEN BUSYING HIMSELF WITH AS THIS STALEMATE CONTINUES?

YES, THAT IS WHY HE WAKES EARLIER AND SLEEPS LATER THAN ANYONE ELSE.

HE ATTENDS TO CASES EVEN THAT MINOR!?

YES, THERE ARE DAYS WHEN HE IS FORCED TO SKIP MEALS.

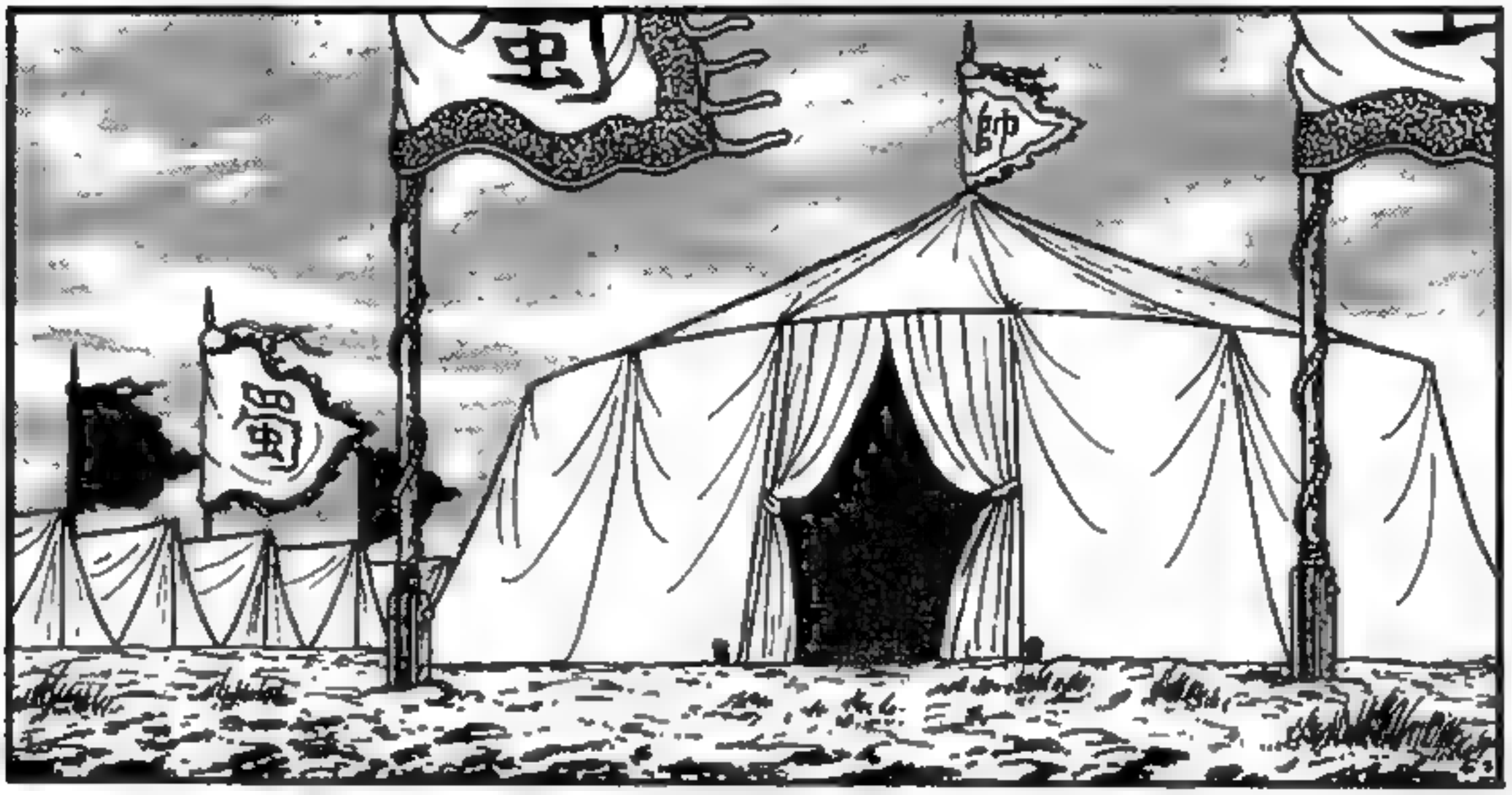
SUCH A BUSY SCHEDULE MUST NOT GIVE HIM ENOUGH TIME TO EAT AND REST.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND WELCOME.

IN ANY CASE, THANK YOU FOR COMING.

I'M SURPRISED HIS BODY IS STILL HOLDING OUT.

IF HE'S WORKING THAT HARD, THEN HIS BODY WILL NOT LAST MUCH LONGER, I MUST DRAG OUT THIS WAR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE...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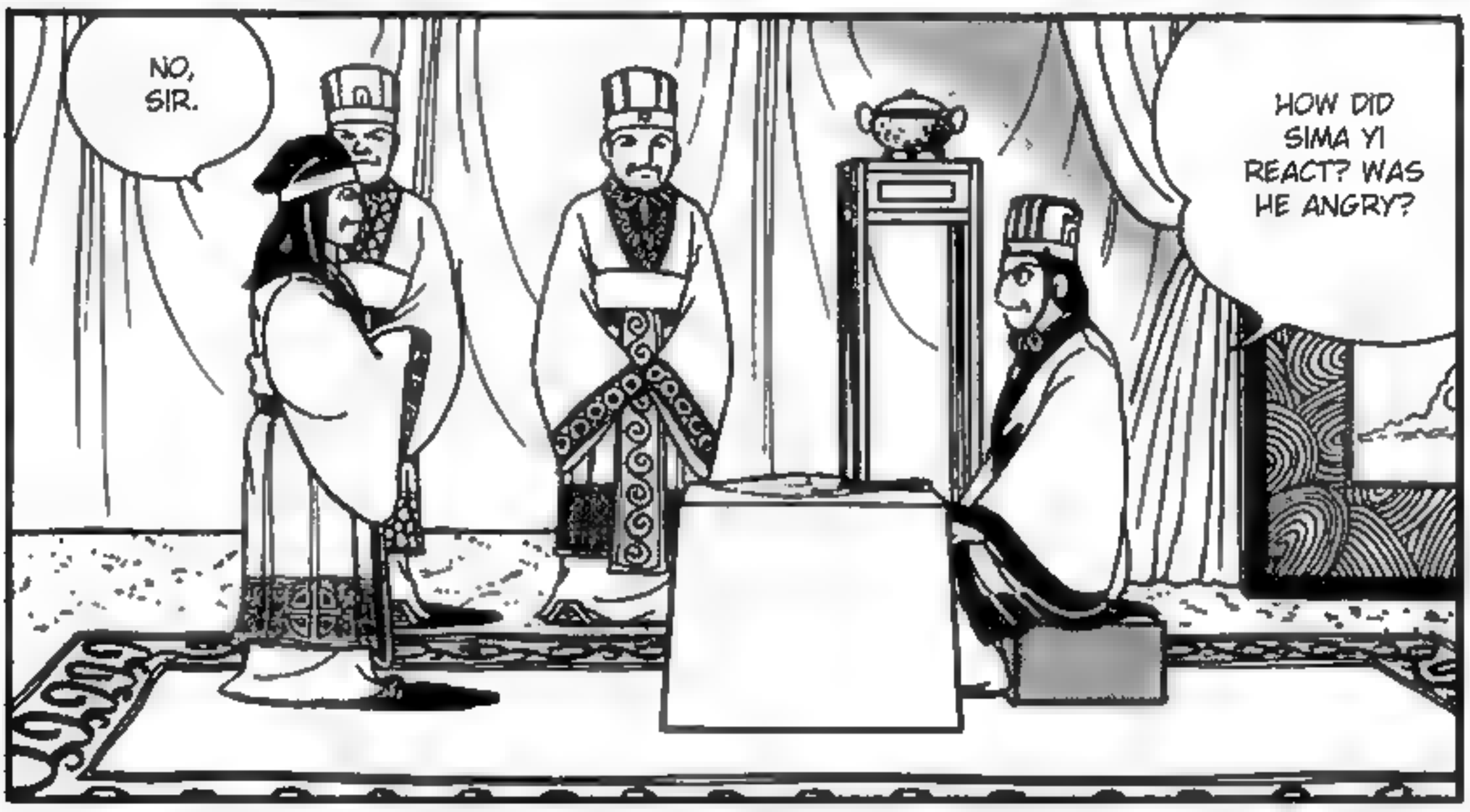
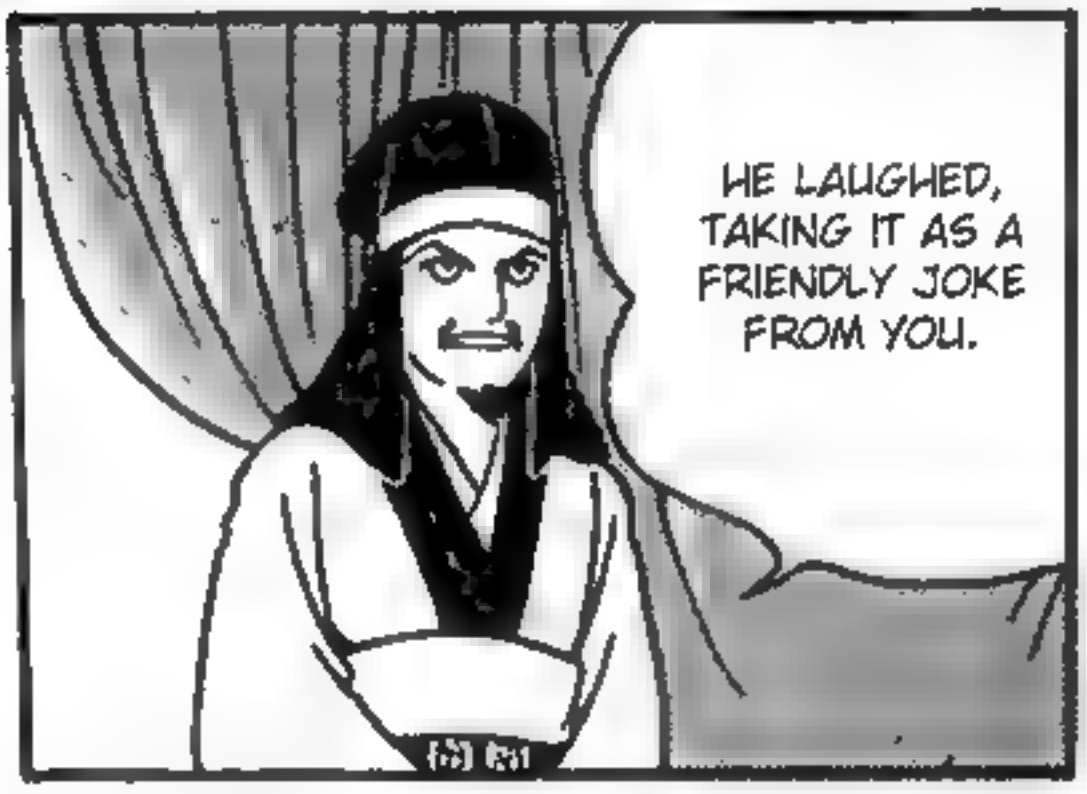

NO, SIR.
HOW DID SIMA YI REACT? WAS HE ANGRY?

HE LAUGHED?


HE LAUGHED, TAKING IT AS A FRIENDLY JOKE FROM YOU.

HE TREATED ME TO WINE AFTERWARDS.

WHAT ELSE...?

I SAID YOU WERE BUSY WORKING FROM EARLY IN THE MORNING TO LATE AT NIGHT...

AND HOW DID YOU REPLY?

DID HE ASK ANYTHING?

YES, HE INQUIRED WHAT YOU DO DAILY...

HE REMARKED WITH SURPRISE THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO KEEP UP SUCH TIRELESS EFFORTS.

YES, SIR.

YOU MAY EXCUSE YOURSELF.

I SEE...

MAY I SAY SOMETHING, SIR?

CURSE THAT SIMA YI... HE'S EAGERLY COUNTING OFF THE YEARS I HAVE LEFT TO LIVE...

YES?

THERE IS A LIMIT TO HOW MUCH A PERSON CAN WORK, AND I BELIEVE YOU ARE NEEDLESSLY GOING BEYOND IT.

EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN DUTIES, AND THE MASTER NEEDS ONLY TO SUPERVISE TO ENSURE THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD IS SUCCESSFUL.

FOR INSTANCE, IN A HOUSEHOLD, THE MALE SERVANTS TEND TO THE FIELDS WHILE THE FEMALE SERVANTS PREPARE THE MEALS. THE ROOSTER WAKES THE PEOPLE, THE DOG GUARDS THE HOUSE FROM THIEVES, THE COW PLOWS THE FIELDS, WHILE THE HORSE CARRIES THE MASTER.

.....

PLEASE DELEGATE MORE TASKS TO YOUR SUBORDINATES AND LOOK AFTER YOUR OWN HEALTH MORE, SIR.

RIGHT NOW, YOU ARE A MASTER TRYING TO DO OTHERS' DUTIES. YOU WILL ONLY RUIN YOUR HEALTH IN PROCESS, WHICH WILL LEAD TO THE HOUSEHOLD'S RUIN.

BUT... WHEN I THINK OF THE DEBT I OWE TO THE PREVIOUS EMPEROR AND THE FUTURE OF THE EMPIRE, I CANNOT BRING MYSELF TO SLEEP PEACEFULLY.

WELL SAID... I AM AWARE I TRY TO DO TOO MUCH...

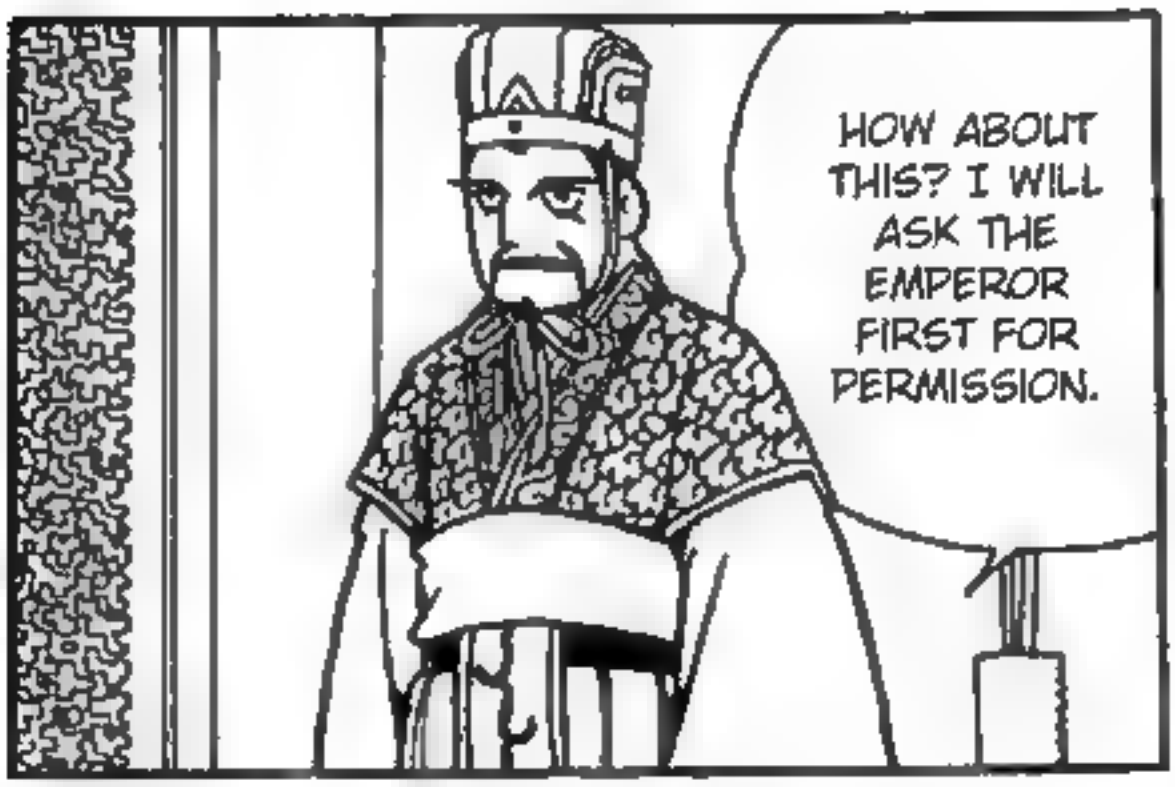
HEAVEN HAS SET A LIFESPAN FOR EVERY MORTAL, AND I FEAR I WILL BE UNABLE TO CARRY OUT ALL MY GOALS BEFORE THE TIME ALOTTED TO ME IS UP.
BUT YOU ARE RIGHT. FORGIVE ME FOR MAKING YOU WORRY. I WILL TRY TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF MY HEALTH FROM NOW.

WHAT BRINGS YOU ALL HERE?

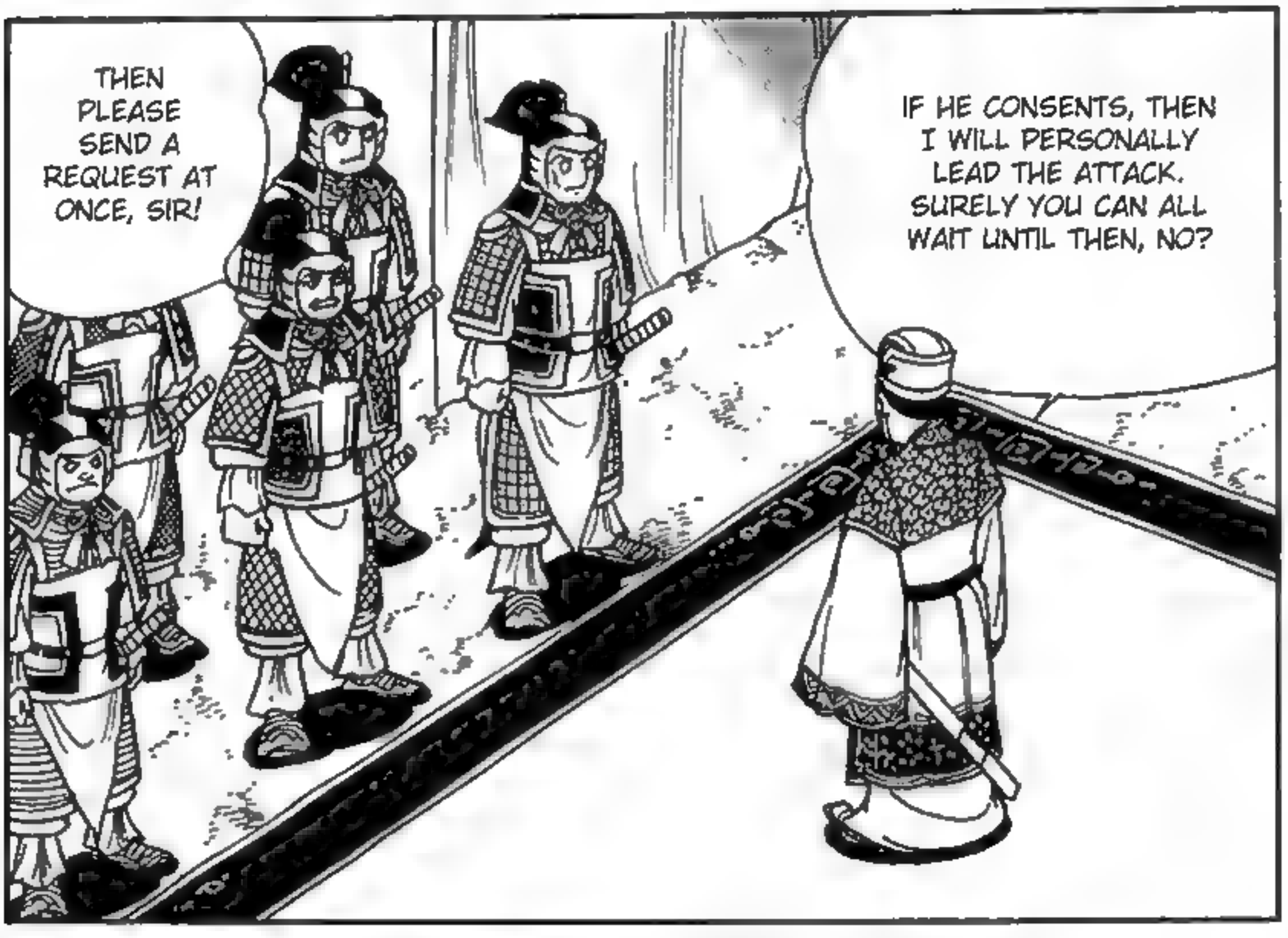
COM-MANDER!

*CENTRAL PLAINS: NORTHERN CHINESE PLAINS AT THE LOWER REACHES OF THE YELLOW RIVER, BUT MORE OFTEN USED AS A METONYM FOR CHINESE CIVILIZATION ITSELF: CENTER OF THE WORLD

WEI IS A GRAND EMPIRE POSSESSING THE CENTRAL PLAINS! HOW CAN WE LET A PERIPHERAL LAND LIKE SHU INSULT US!?
WE CANNOT ACCEPT KONGMING'S BRAZEN INSULT TO OUR COMMANDER!
LOOK, I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU ALL FEEL. I FEEL THE SAME WAY MYSELF.
PLEASE GIVE US PERMISSION TO ATTACK! WE WILL WIPE AWAY THIS DISGRACE!
ABSOLUTELY NOT. THE EMPEROR HAS CAUTIONED US TO REMAIN ON THE DEFENSE IF POSSIBLE AT THE START OF THIS CAMPAIGN.
SO YOU GRANT US PERMISSION THEN?
WE WILL ATTACK EVEN WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION!
WE CANNOT JUST STAND HERE AND DO NOTHING!


HOW ABOUT THIS? I WILL ASK THE EMPEROR FIRST FOR PERMISSION.

WAIT, WAIT!


THEN PLEASE SEND A REQUEST AT ONCE, SIR!
IF HE CONSENTS, THEN I WILL PERSONALLY LEAD THE ATTACK. SURELY YOU CAN ALL WAIT UNTIL THEN, NO?

ALRIGHT, I WILL WRITE A MEMORIAL AT ONCE.

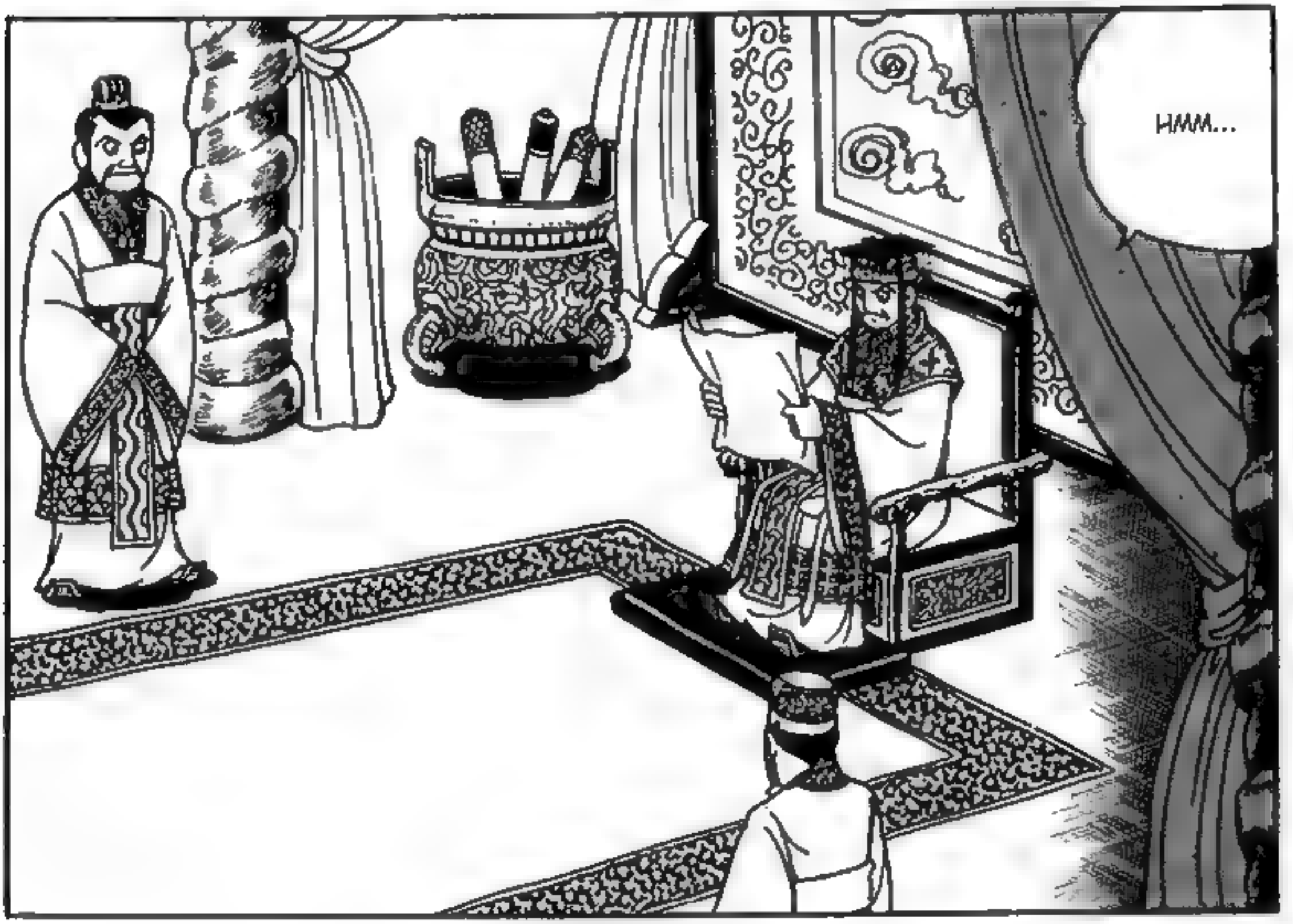
THERE. TAKE THIS TO HIS MAJESTY CURRENTLY IN HEFEI.

"YOUR SERVANT, SIMA YI, HUMBLY REQUESTS..."

YES, SIR.

FINE...

THERE, I HOPE THAT WILL SATISFY YOU SO PLEASE DO NOT ACT ON YOUR OWN UNTIL THE EMPEROR SENDS HIS REPLY. IF HE CONSENTS, I PROMISE I WILL ALL GIVE YOU CHANCES TO EARN MERIT AND REDEEM YOUR HONOUR.


HMM...

I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS IS ACTUALLY SIMA YI'S DESIRE.

WHY HAS SIMA YI SENT THIS *MEMORIAL* TO REQUEST OFFENSIVE ACTION EVEN THOUGH I ALREADY ADVISED HIM TO STAY ON THE DEFENSIVE?

IT MUST BE BECOMING HARDER AND HARDER FOR SIMA YI TO CONTROL THE FRUSTRATION OF HIS OFFICERS.

I'VE HEARD THE SHU SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN TAUNTING OUR WESTERN FORCES AND KONGMING HAS PERSONALLY INSULTED SIMA YI.

THEN WHY THIS *MEMORIAL*?

AHH, THAT MAKES SENSE.

BY SENDING THIS *MEMORIAL*, SIMA YI SECRETLY HOPES YOUR MAJESTY WILL REJECT IT AND THEREBY RESTRAIN THE BELLICOSE OFFICERS.

YES, SIR.

THEN SEND BACK A NEGATIVE REPLY AT ONCE!

THUS, CAO RUI SENT XIN PI TO THE WESTERN FRONT

魏
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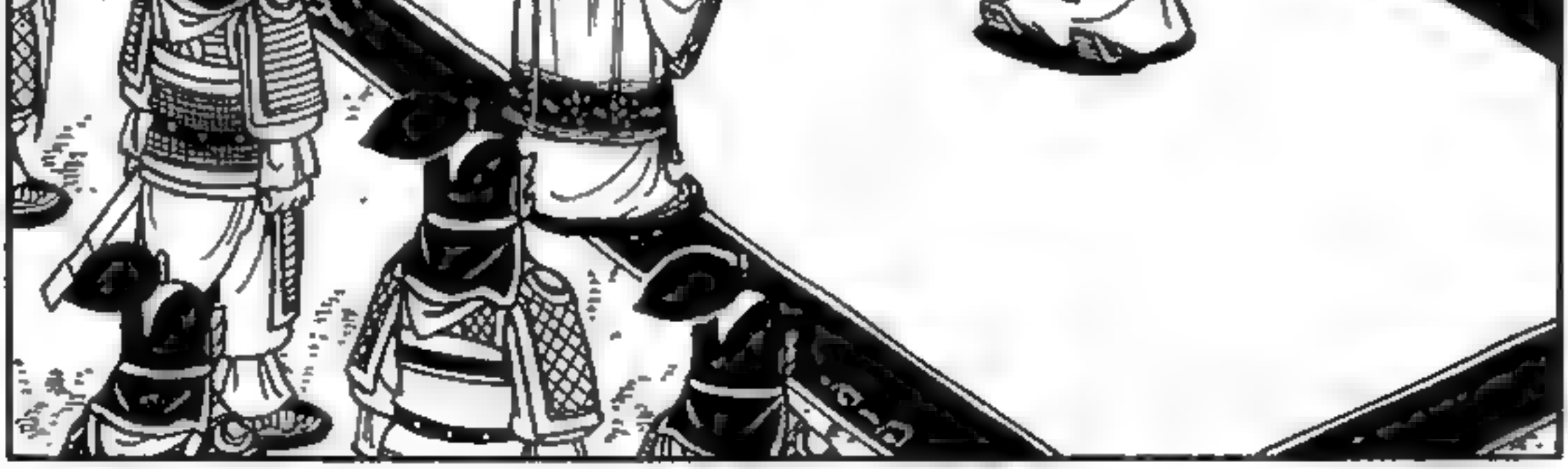
I PRESENT THE IMPERIAL ORDER.


ANY OFFICER WHO DARES TO ACT CONTRARY TO HIS MAJESTY'S WISHES WILL BE PUNISHED FOR HIGH TREASON.
HIS MAJESTY STRONGLY DISAGREES WITH COMMANDER SIMA YI'S REQUEST FOR OFFENSIVE ACTION.

NOW RETURN TO YOUR POSTS.

OF COURSE. IT'S CLEAR THAT RESPONDING TO KONGMING'S BAITS IS THE FASTEST WAY TO DEFEAT.
THANK YOU FOR DISCERNING MY TRUE INTENTIONS, XIN PI.

PRAYING TO STARS

WHAT CAN I DO IF THE ENEMIES REFUSE TO MOVE...?

MY TAUNTS HAD NO EFFECT, I SEE..

HAS HE?

FEI YI HAS COME FROM CHENGDU, CHANCELLOR.

GREETINGS. WHAT CAUSES YOU TO MAKE THE LONG JOURNEY TO HERE?

THEY'VE WITHDRAWN!?

I'VE COME TO INFORM YOU THAT WU HAS WITHDRAWN ITS ARMIES FROM WEI.

AFTER LOSING MANY SHIPS, SUPPLIES, AND MEN IN THIS ATTACK AND SEEING THE ADVANCE OF THEIR THREE ARMIES CHECKED, WU QUICKLY LOST ITS INTEREST AND WITHDREW, RATHER THAN CONTINUING A PROTRACTED WAR.

THE WEI ARMY, LED BY MAN CHONG, MADE A DEVASTATING SURPRISE ATTACK AT THE WU VANGUARD CAMPED AT CHAO LAKE.

PLEASE GIVE ME THE DETAILS.

YES, SIR...

THEY WITHDREW THAT EASILY...?

SO THEY WITHDREW...

THIS NEWS CAME AS A GREAT SHOCK FOR KONGMING

THEN I MUST REFORM MY STRATEGY AGAIN...

MN!?

CALL A DOCTOR AT ONCE!

IT'S NOTHING... JUST A LITTLE HEADACHE. ALL I NEED IS A LITTLE REST...

CHANCEL-LOR!?

ARE YOU ALRIGHT, SIR!?

HOW IS HE, DOCTOR?

I'M AFRAID IT'S QUITE SERIOUS.

YEARS OF STRESS AND STRENUOUS ACTIVITY HAS ALREADY MADE HIS ILLNESS PROGRESS TO AN ADVANCED STAGE.

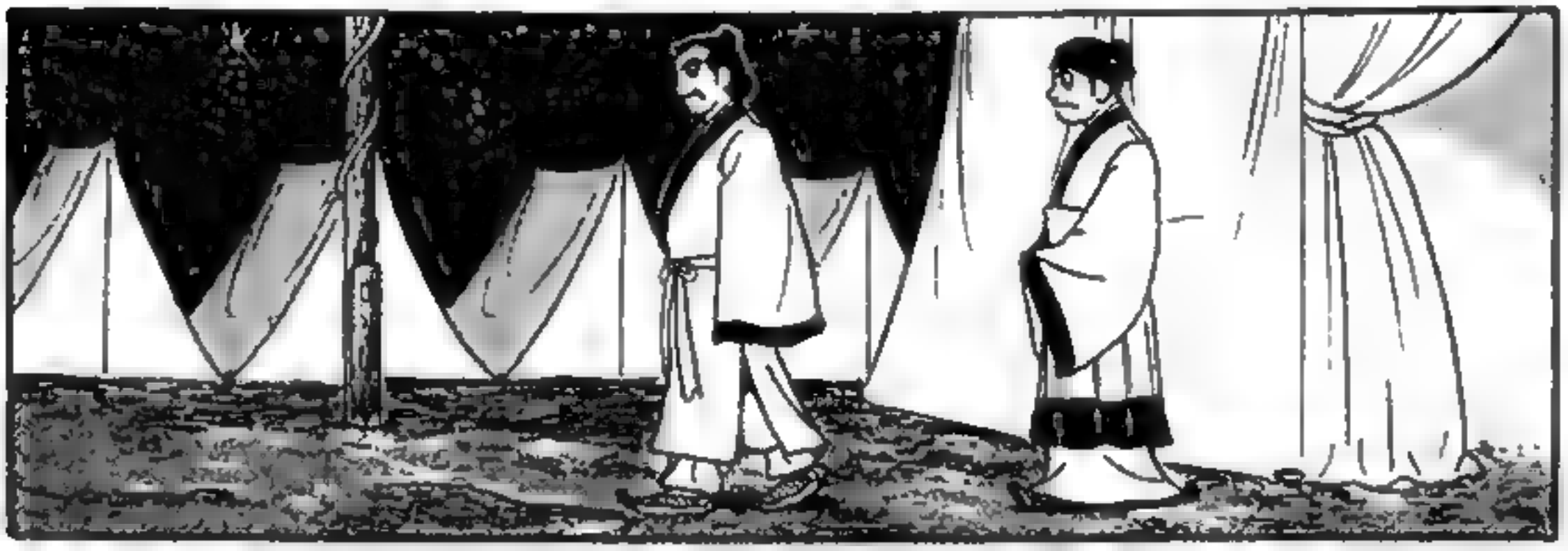
WHA!?

UNDERSTOOD, DOCTOR.

I ADVISE GETTING AS MUCH REST AS POSSIBLE.

I'LL TAKE A SHORT STROLL.

IT MUST BE DUE TO RESTING ALL DAY, SIR.
I FEEL A LOT BETTER TODAY.



WHAT A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT.

YES, SIR.

CALL JIANG WEI!

HM!?

JIANG WEI, UPON LOOKING AT THE STARRY SKY, I'VE REALIZED MY LIFE'S END HAS COME.

DID YOU CALL FOR ME, SIR?

LOOK! IN THE THREE STEPS CONSTELLATION, THE GUEST STAR IS BRIGHTER THAN USUAL WHILE THE HOST STAR IS FADING, ALONG WITH ITS SUPPORTING STARS. THIS SIGNIFIES THAT MY TIME HAS COME.

WHA!?

THIS IS NOT BECAUSE I AM DEJECTED OR WITHOUT HOPE. I AM SIMPLY STATING HEAVEN'S WILL.

WHY DO YOU SAY SUCH WEAK-HEARTED THINGS, SIR?

YOU ARE A PILLAR OF SHU. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE EMPIRE WITHOUT YOU?

STILL, I DO NOT WISH TO HEAR YOU SPEAK OF DEATH, SIR.

THE LIVING MUST DIE ONE DAY. DEATH IS SIMPLY A RETURN TO NATURE, NOT A CAUSE FOR GRIEF.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHY HAVE YOU NOT PRAYED TO THE STARS YET?

THAT IS WHY I CALLED YOU OUT HERE TONIGHT.

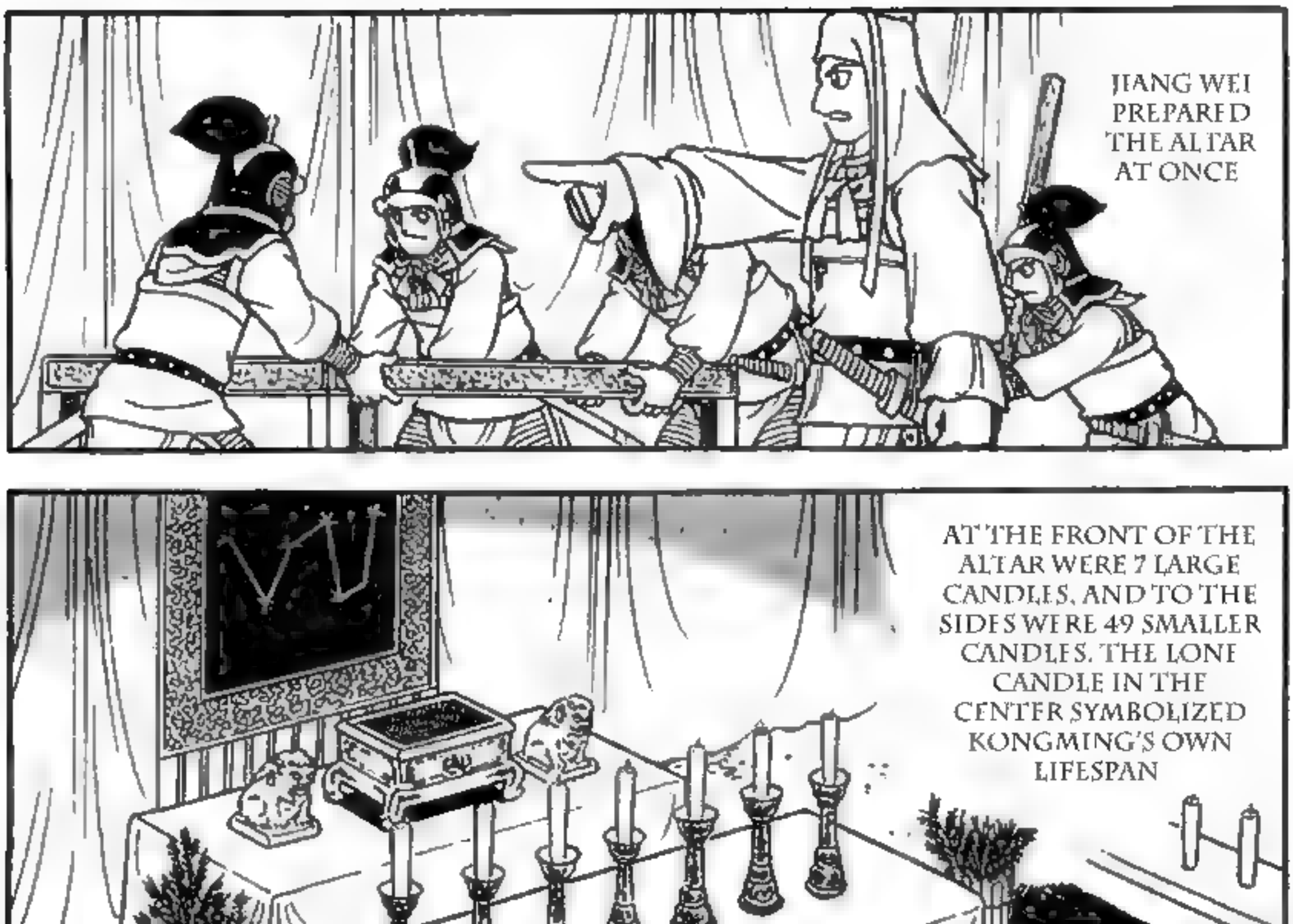
IS THERE NOT A WAY TO EXTEND ONE'S LIFESPAN BY PRAYING TO THE STARS IN HEAVEN?

AH, YES, OF COURSE. I AM FAMILIAR WITH THE RITUAL BUT I'D NEVER CONSIDERED USING IT FOR MY OWN SELF.

YES, SIR.

VERY WELL. HAVE 49 SOLDIERS DRESSED IN BLACK ARMOUR AND HOLDING BLACK FLAGS GUARD MY TENT.

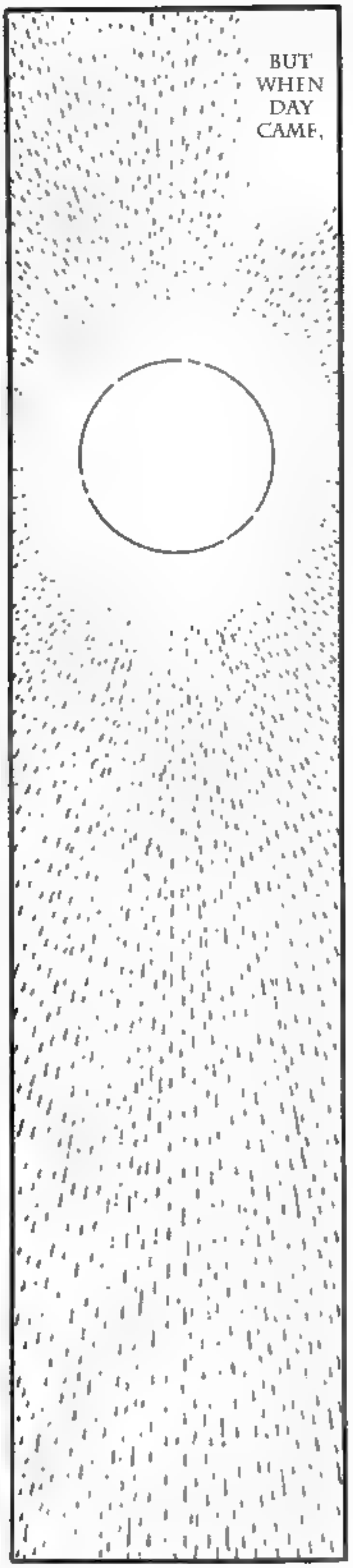
FOR SEVEN NIGHTS, I WILL PRAY TO THE SEVEN STARS OF THE BIG DIPPER IN FRONT OF SEVEN CANDLES. IF MY CANDLE STAYS LIT FOR SEVEN DAYS, THEN THAT MEANS HEAVEN WILL EXTEND MY LIFE BY ANOTHER 12 YEARS. IF NOT, I MUST ACCEPT MY DEATH.


JIANG WEI PREPARED THE ALTAR AT ONCE
AT THE FRONT OF THE ALTAR WERE 7 LARGE CANDLES, AND TO THE SIDES WERE 49 SMALLER CANDLES. THE LONE CANDLE IN THE CENTER SYMBOLIZED KONGMING'S OWN LIFESPAN

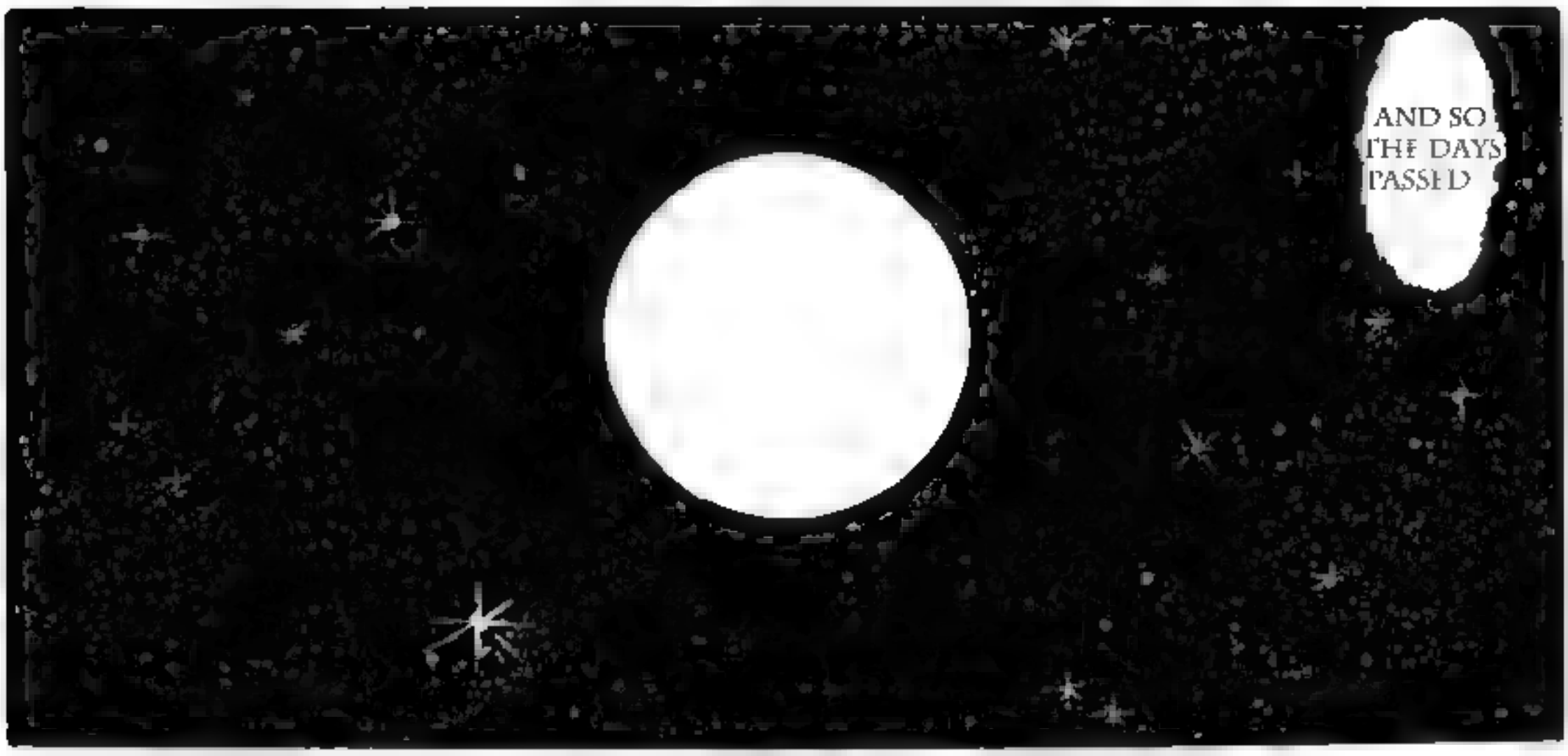
ONCE THE ALTAR WAS PREPARED, KONGMING PRAYED ALL NIGHT WITHOUT REST

OUTSIDE THE TENT WERE 49 GUARDS WHO ALSO STOOD WATCH WITHOUT REST

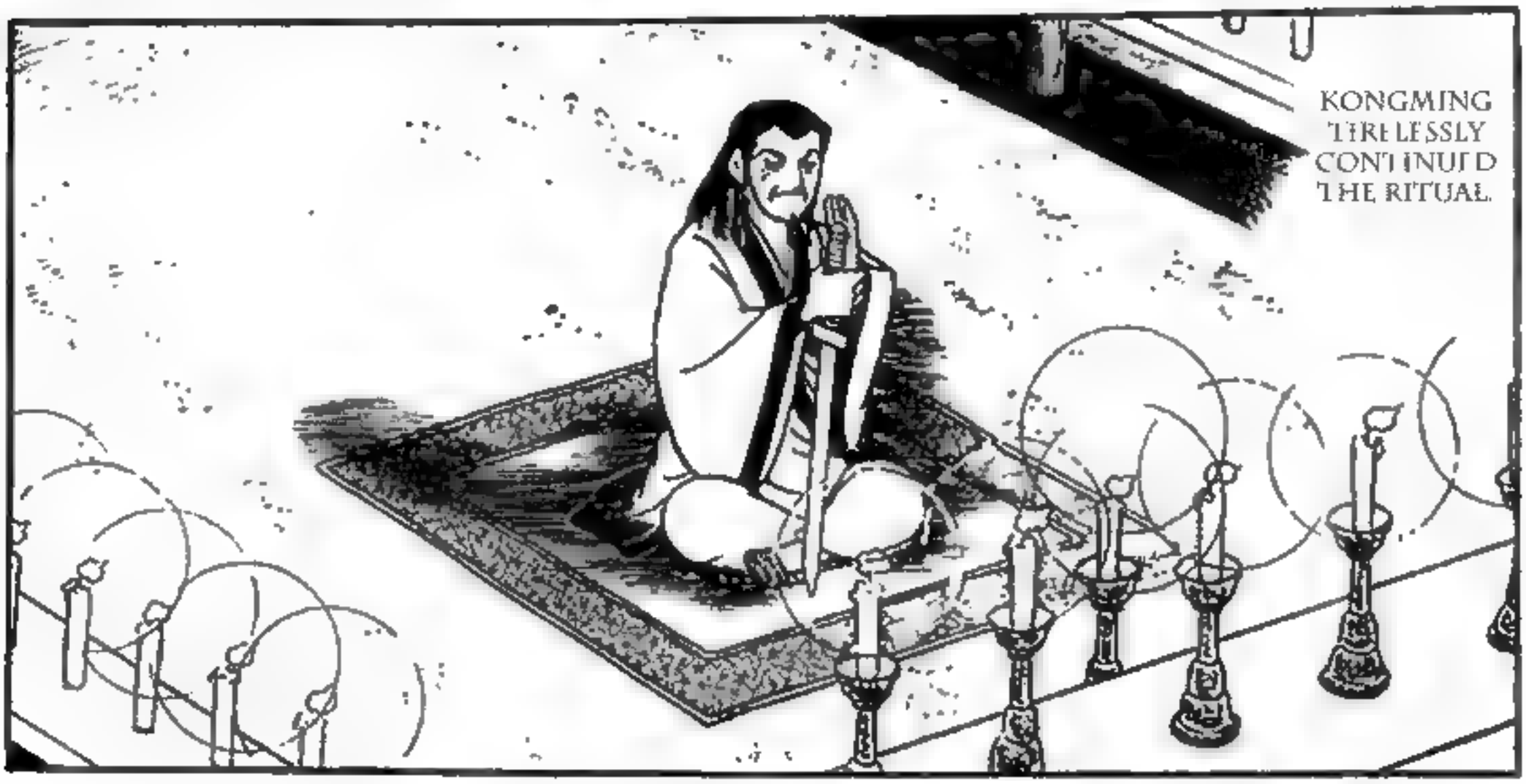
KONGMING RESUMED HIS USUAL DUTIES.


BUT WHEN DAY CAME,

AND HELD MEETINGS WITH THE OFFICERS


AND SO
THE DAYS
PASSED

EVERY
NIGHT,


KONGMING
TIRELESSLY
CONTINUED
THE RITUAL.

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HM?

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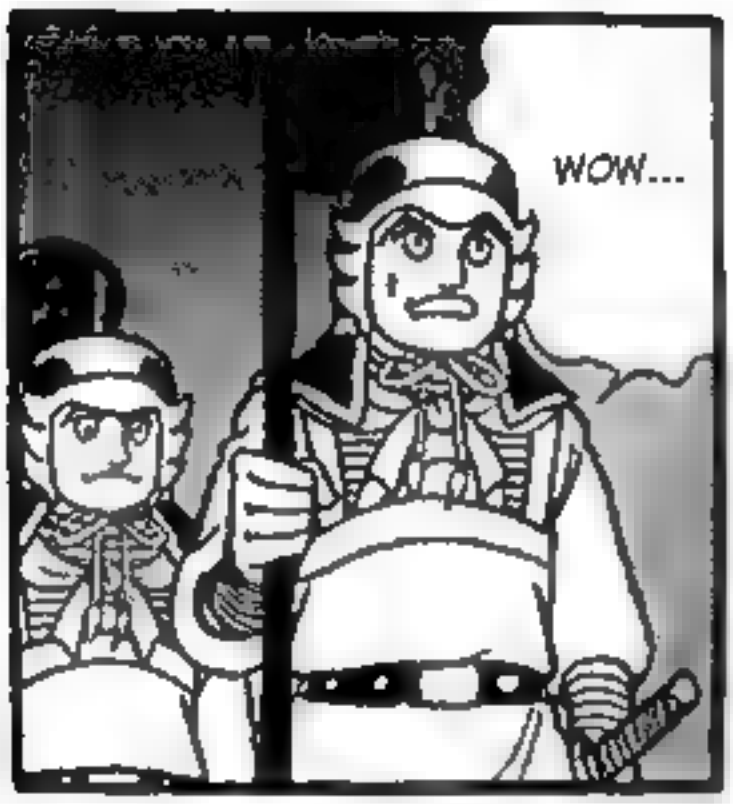
HEY LOOK AT
THE SKY!


WOW...

MAYBE IT'S A SIGN. ALERT THE COM-MANDER AT ONCE.

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WHAT IS IT?

SIR!

WHAT!

THERE'S A METEOR SHOWER!

AHH!

THE GENERAL'S STAR IS DRIFTING FROM ITS POSITION! THAT CAN ONLY MEAN KONGMING IS DEAD OR GRAVELY ILL...

HM?

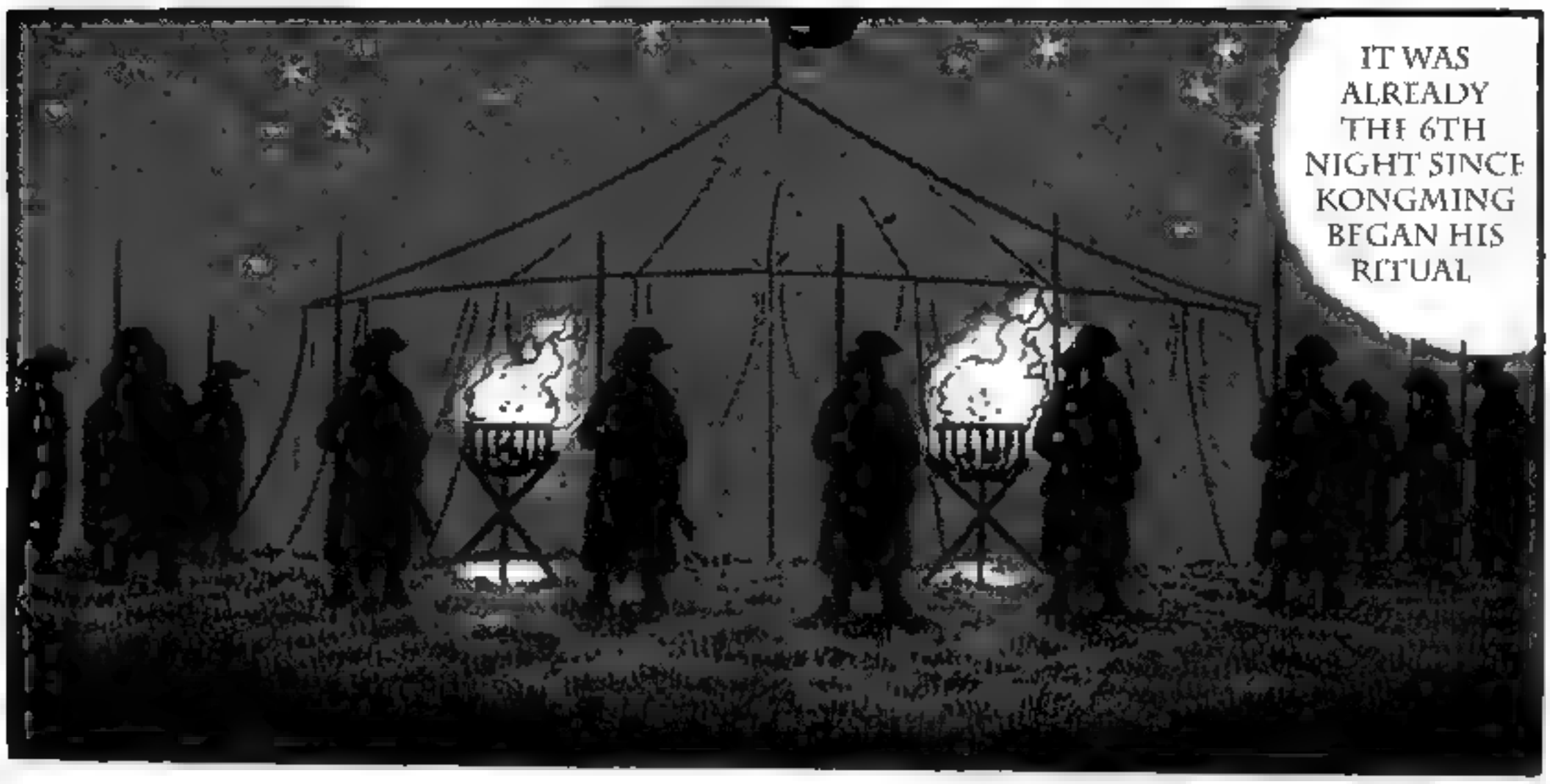
ATTACK WUZHANG PLAINS AT ONCE! IF SHU FAILS TO COME OUT AND CHALLENGE YOU, THEN THAT MEANS KONGMING IS DEAD.

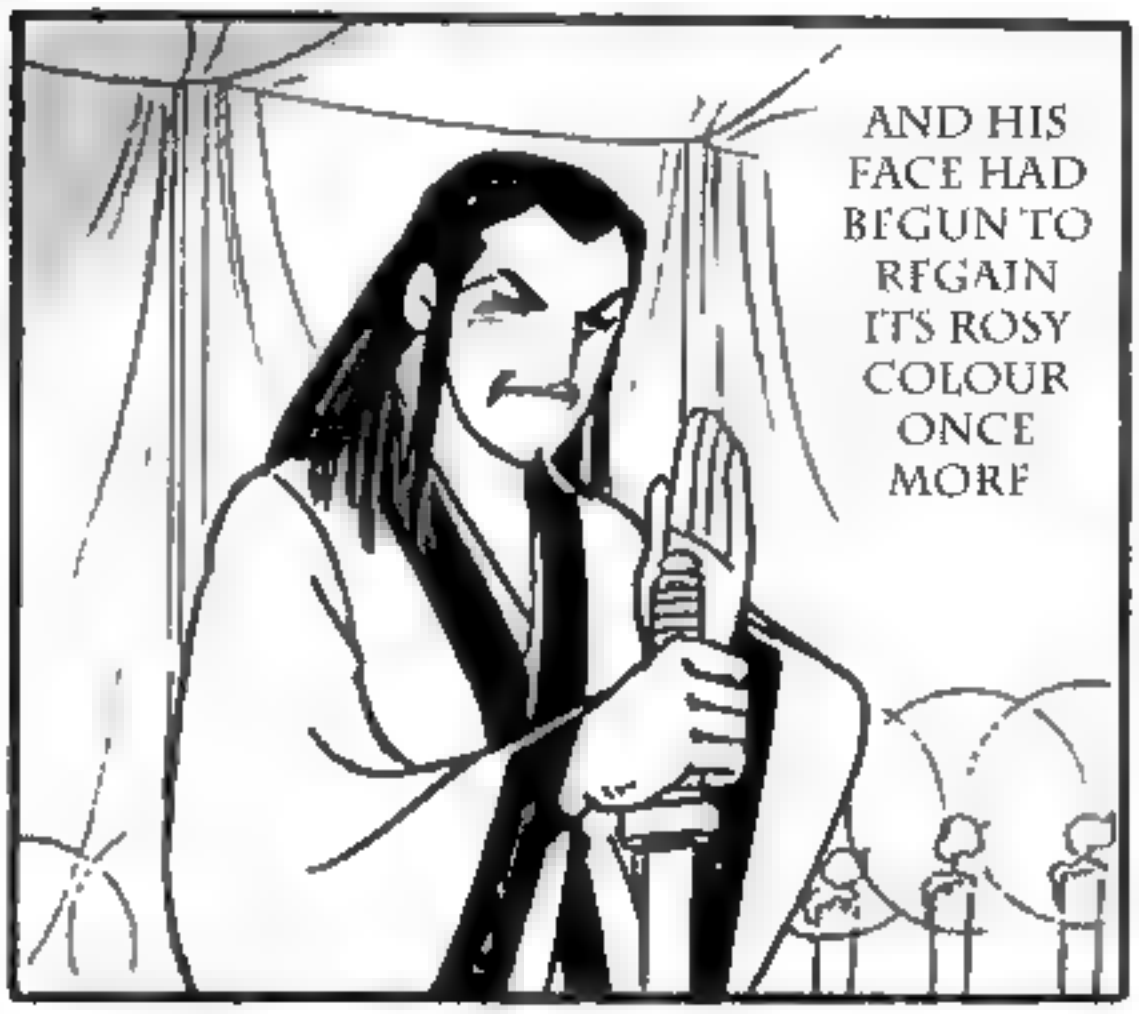
YES?

XIAHOU BA!

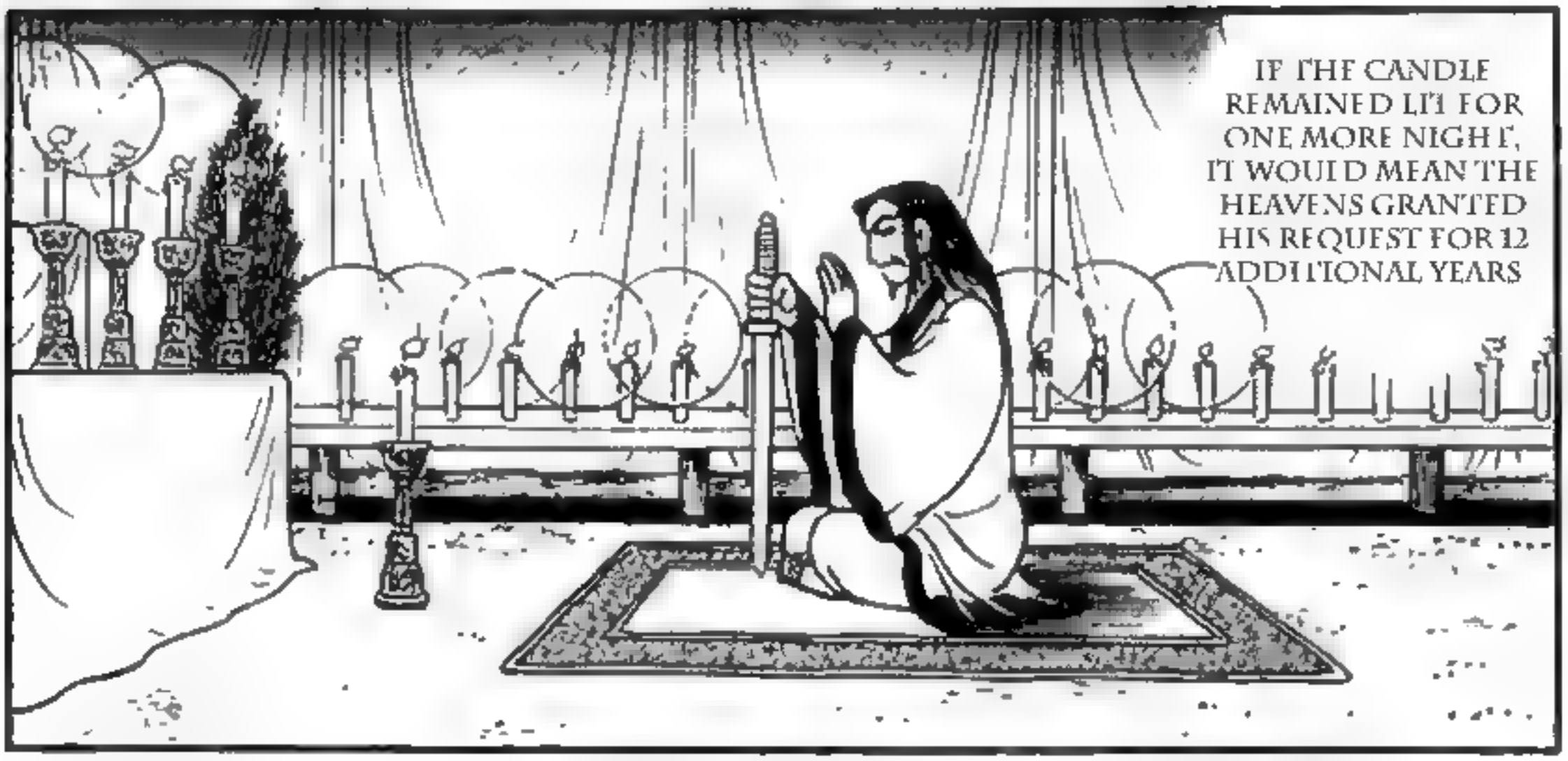
I'LL GET TO IT RIGHT AWAY, SIR.

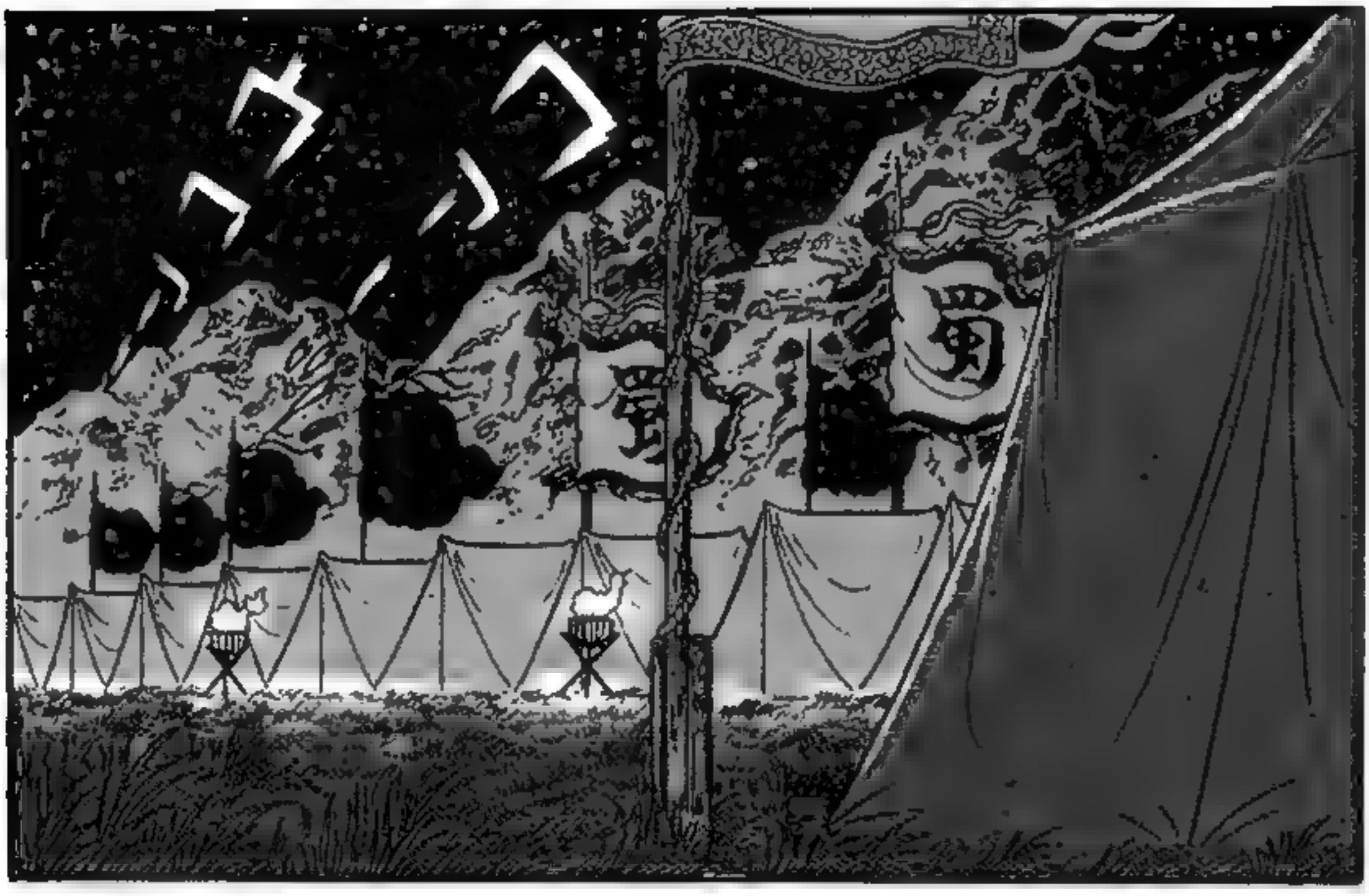
IF THEY RETURN THE ATTACK, THEN RETREAT, FOR IT MEANS KONGMING IS STILL ALIVE.


IT WAS ALREADY THE 6TH NIGHT SINCE KONGMING BEGAN HIS RITUAL


AND HIS FACE HAD BEGUN TO REGAIN ITS ROSY COLOUR ONCE MORE

KONGMING S CANDLE STILL BURNED.


IF THE CANDLE REMAINED LIT FOR ONE MORE NIGHT, IT WOULD MEAN THE HEAVENS GRANTED HIS REQUEST FOR 12 ADDITIONAL YEARS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HM?

EMERGENCY ALERT!

DON'T BE STUPID! THE ENEMIES ARE ATTACKING RIGHT NOW!

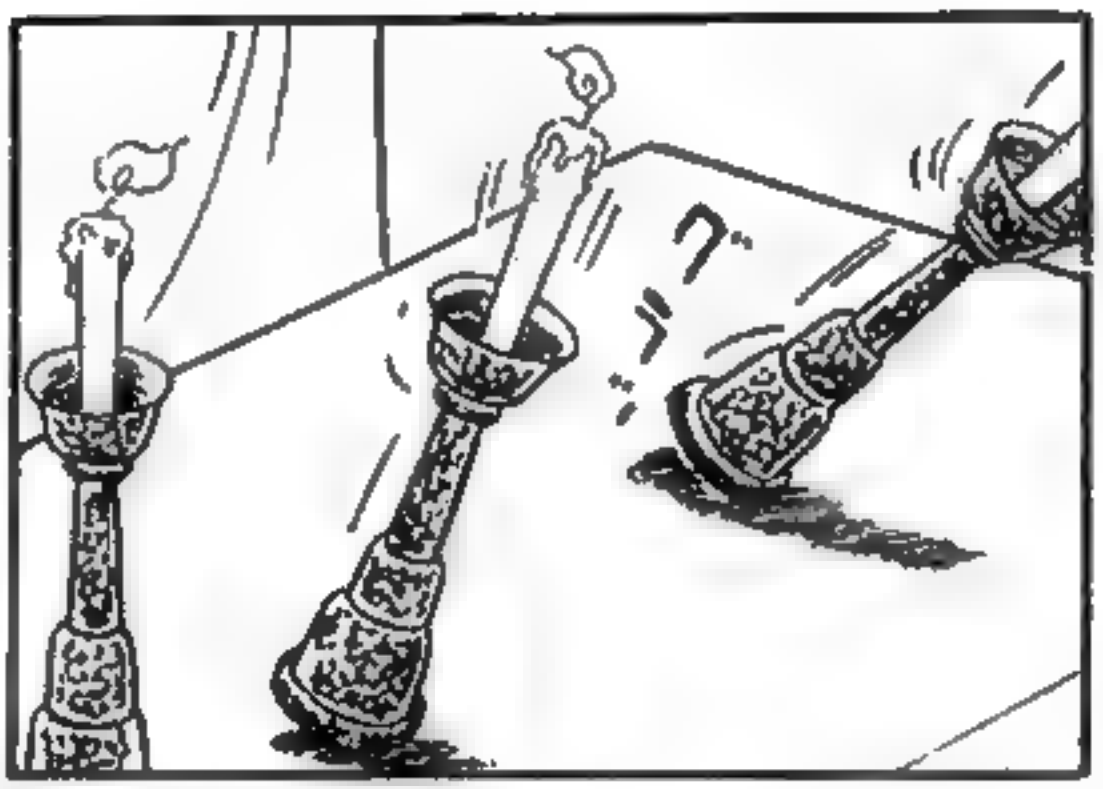
THE CHANCELLOR SAID NOT TO ALLOW ANYONE INSIDE, SIR!

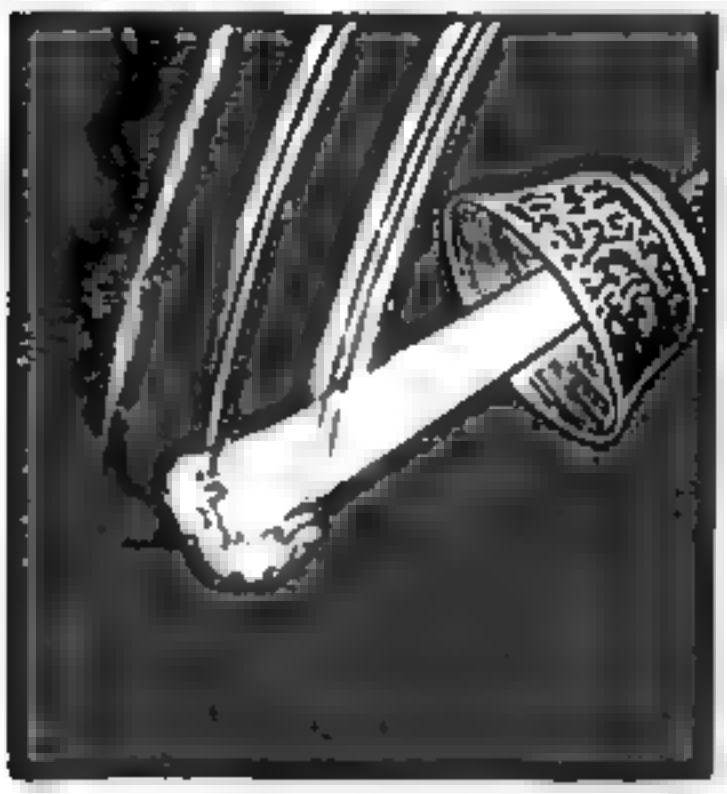
CHANCELLOR! THE WEI ARMY IS ATTACKING!

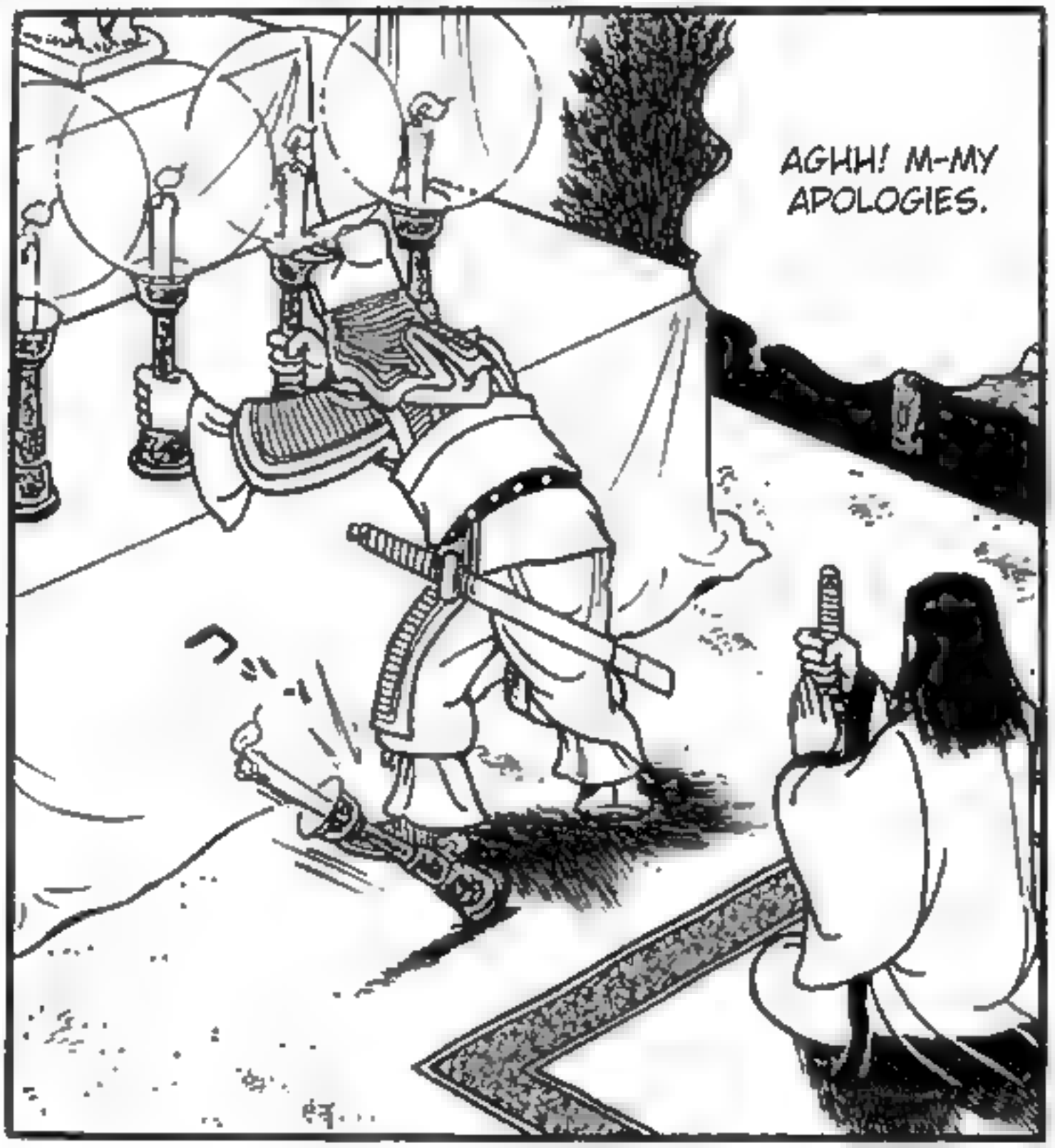
I SAID THE ENEMIES ARE ATTACKING!

CHANCELLOR!

WHA?






AGHH! M-MY APOLOGIES.

HOW DARE YOU DISRUPT THE RITUAL!

WEI YAN!

DO YOU THINK A SIMPLE SORRY SOLVES THE MATTER!?

HEY! I APOLOGIZED, DIDN'T I!?

THE CANDLE DID NOT GO OUT BECAUSE OF WEI YAN. HEAVEN HAS SPOKEN.

STOP IT!

Y-YES, SIR...

THE ATTACK TONIGHT IS SIMPLY SIMA YI TESTING HOW SICK I AM. WEI YAN, GO OUT AND DRIVE THEM OFF FROM THE FIELD.

LET'S DRIVE OFF THE ENEMIES!

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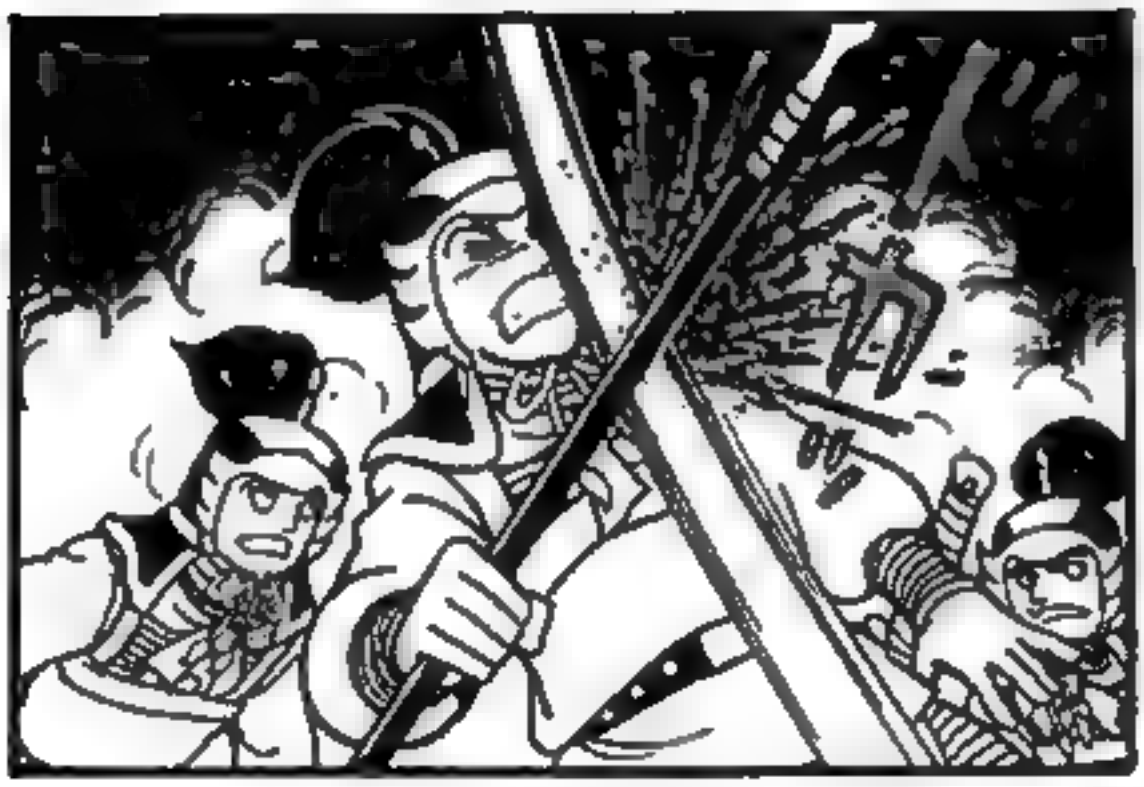
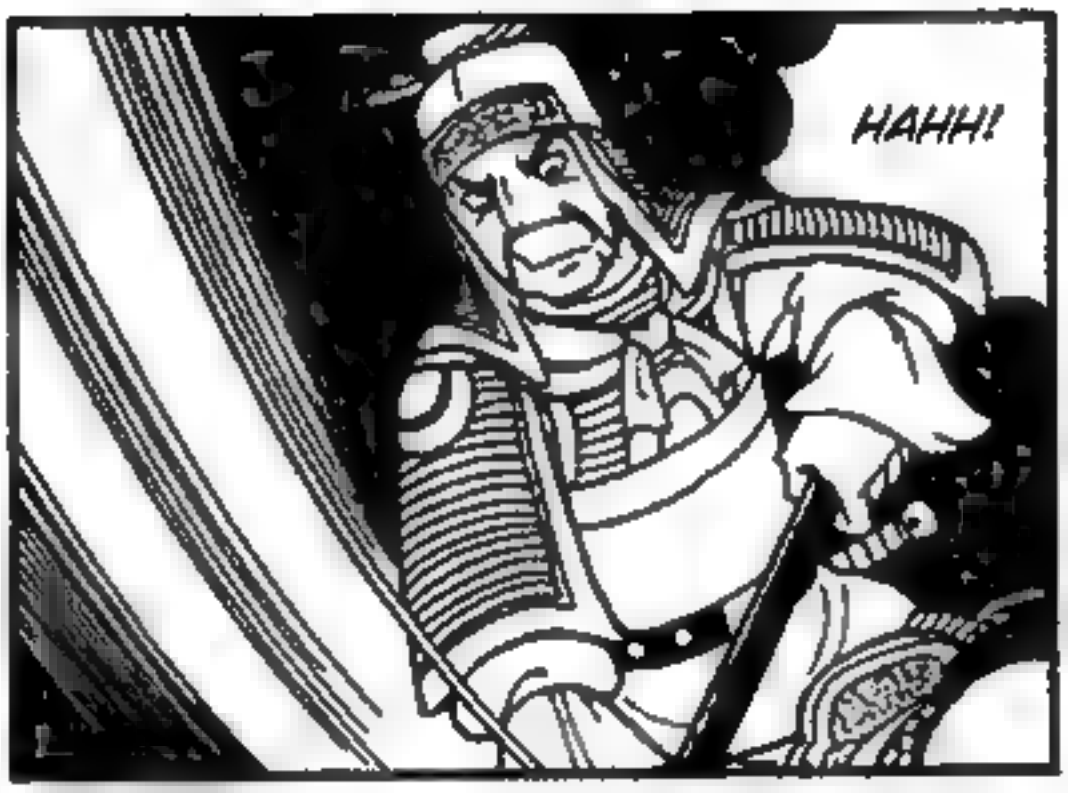
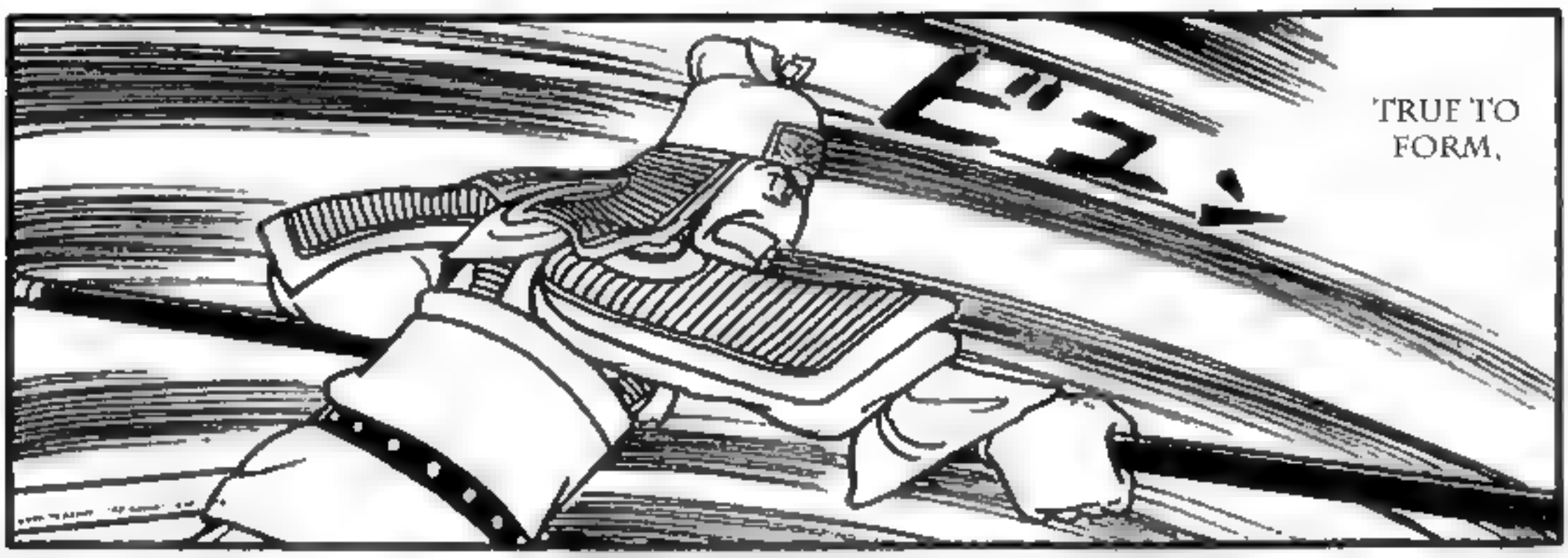



HAHH!


TRUE TO FORM,

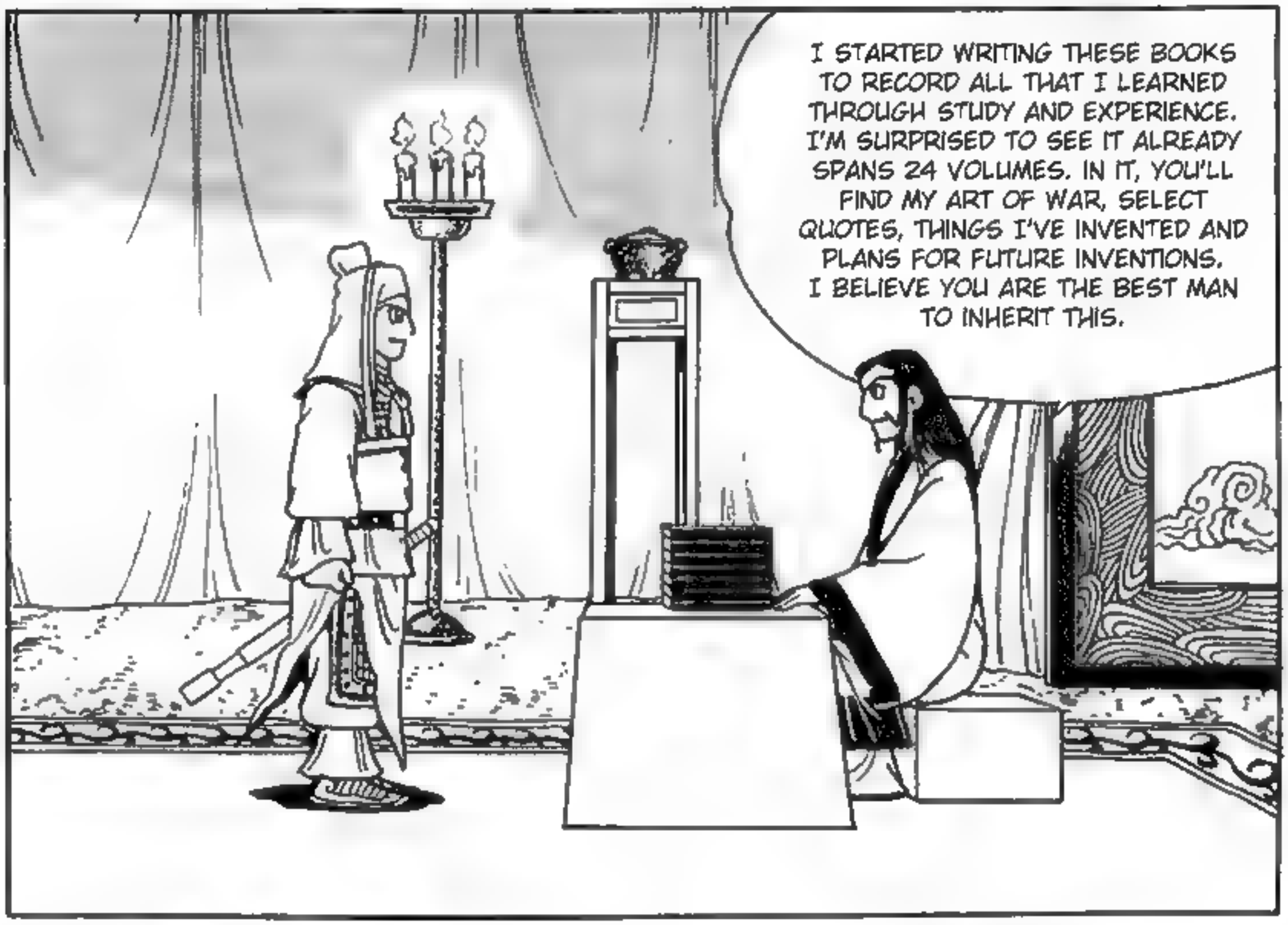
THE ENEMIES MELTED IN FRONT OF WEIYAN'S FIERCE ATTACK

YES, SIR.

COME.

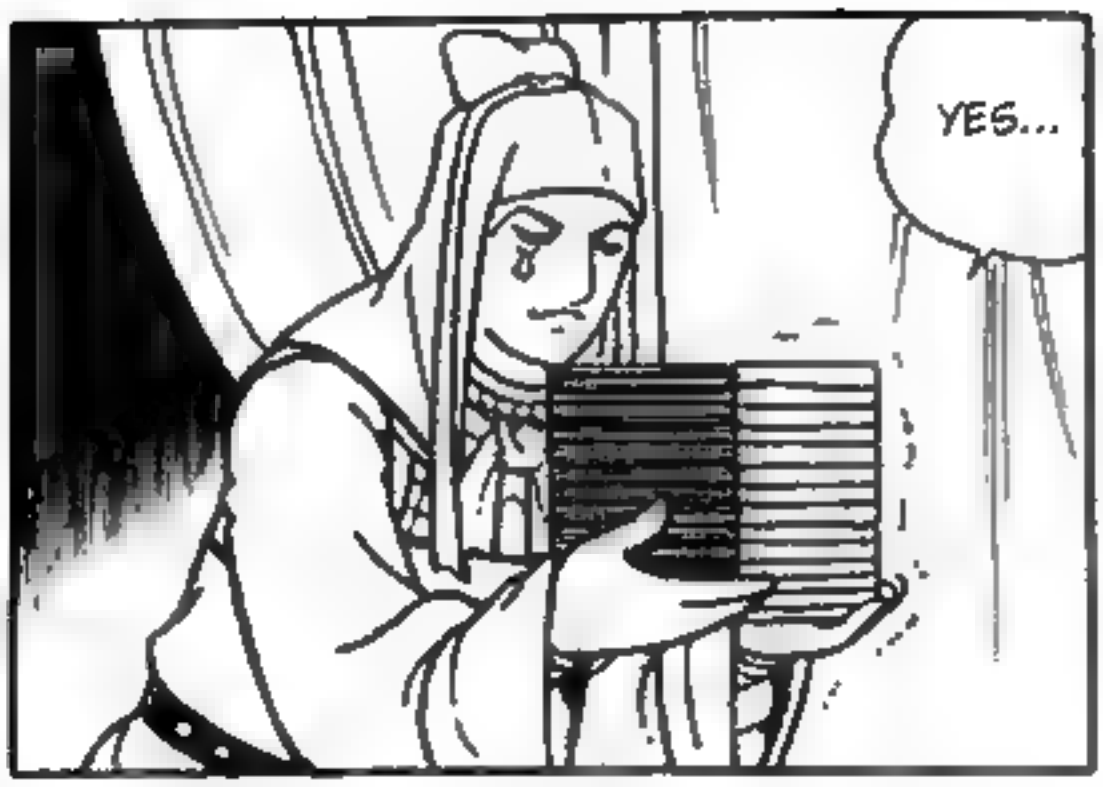
SAY NO MORE.

JUST ONE MORE NIGHT AND YOU WOULD'VE...!

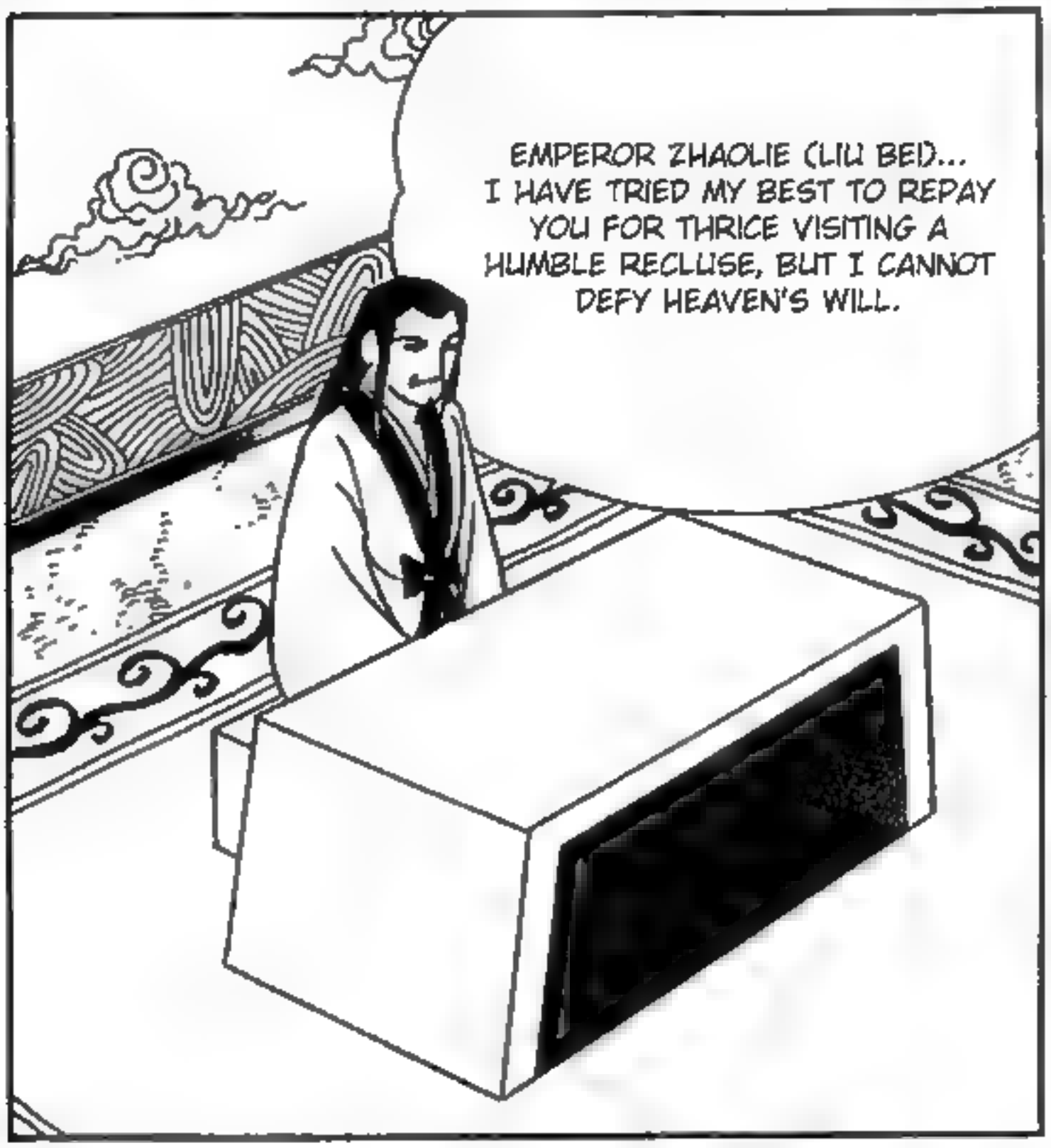

I STARTED WRITING THESE BOOKS TO RECORD ALL THAT I LEARNED THROUGH STUDY AND EXPERIENCE. I'M SURPRISED TO SEE IT ALREADY SPANS 24 VOLUMES. IN IT, YOU'LL FIND MY ART OF WAR, SELECT QUOTES, THINGS I'VE INVENTED AND PLANS FOR FUTURE INVENTIONS. I BELIEVE YOU ARE THE BEST MAN TO INHERIT THIS.

YES, SIR...

PLEASE WORK HARD FOR THE SAKE OF SHU WHEN I AM GONE.


YES...

NOW EXCUSE YOURSELF AND BRING MA DAI HERE.


EMPEROR ZHAOLIE (LIU BEI)... I HAVE TRIED MY BEST TO REPAY YOU FOR THRICE VISITING A HUMBLE RECLUSE, BUT I CANNOT DEFY HEAVEN'S WILL.

AFTER MAKING A FEW PREPARATIONS TO PROTECT YOUR SON'S REIGN, I WILL COME JOIN YOUR SIDE IN THE AFTERLIFE.

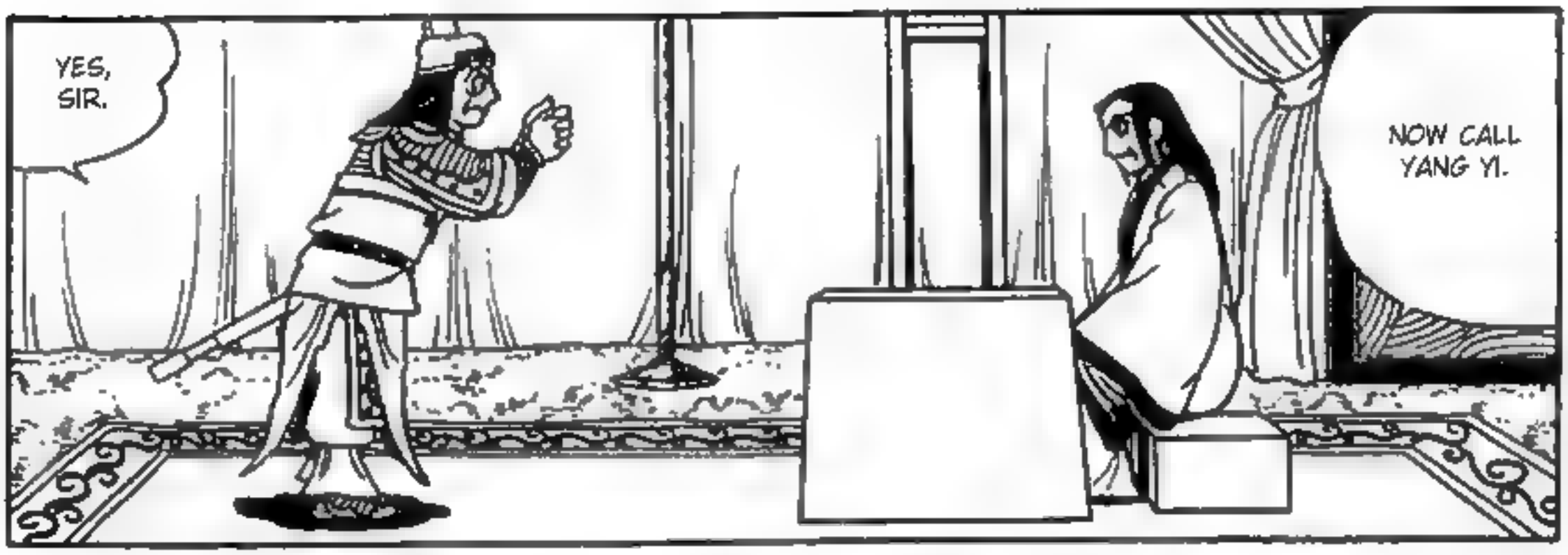
YES, COME CLOSER.

DID YOU CALL FOR ME, SIR?

ONCE I PASS AWAY, WEI YAN WILL NO DOUBT REBEL. IN SUCH A CASE, YOU MUST PREVENT HIM FROM DEFECTING TO WEI NO MATTER WHAT. IF HE SERVES WEI, HE WILL BE A MOST DANGEROUS THREAT TO SHU.

UNDER-STOOD.

THUS, YOU SHOULD...


YES, SIR.
NOW CALL YANG YI.

COUGH COUGH

MN!?

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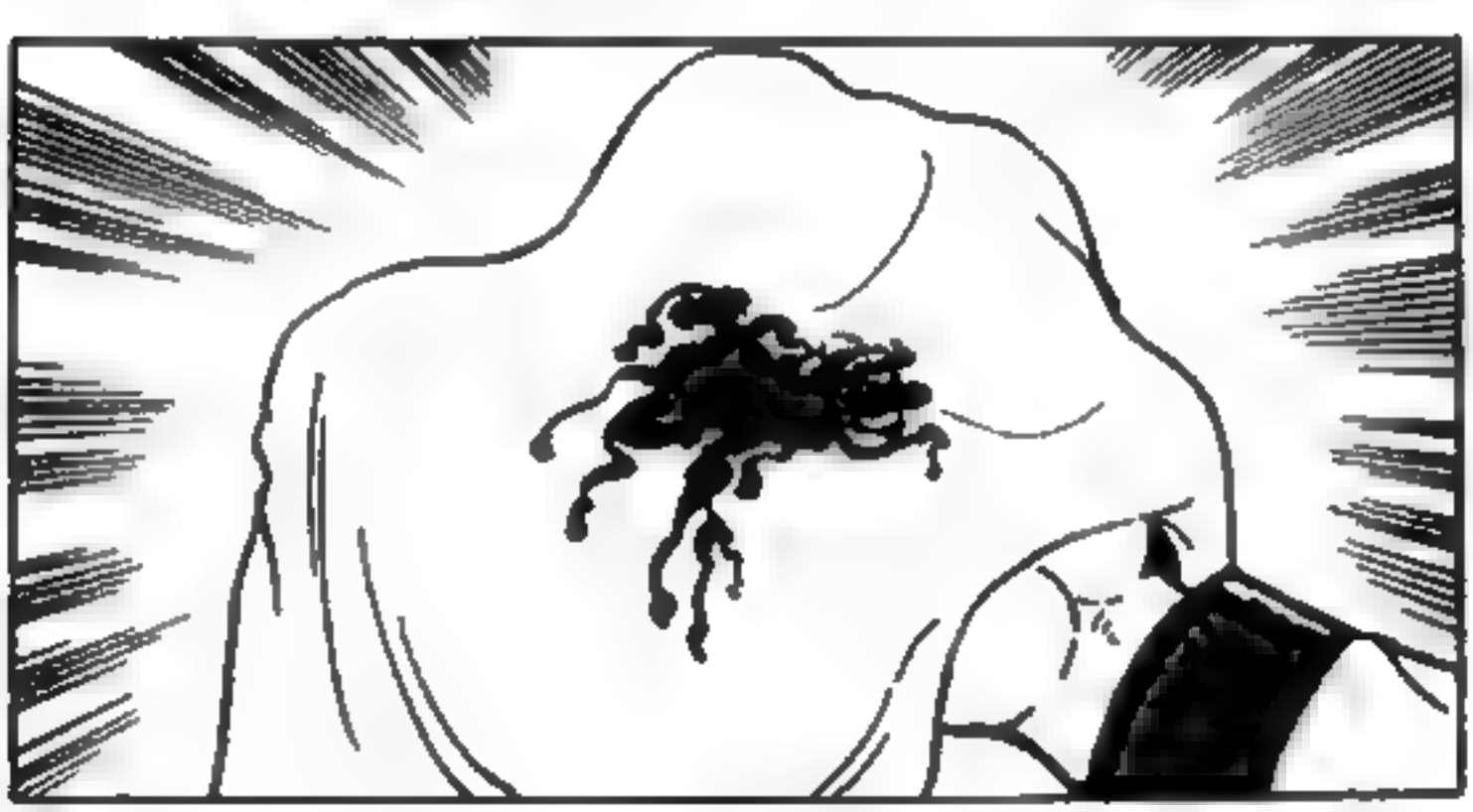


HAS SIR CALLED FOR ME?

I'D LIKE TO CONTINUE CARRYING OUT THE FORMER EMPEROR'S WILL, BUT NO MAN CAN DEFY HEAVEN.

PLEASE DO NOT SAY SUCH WEAK-HEARTED THINGS.

THE HEAVENS TELL ME IT IS MY TIME TO PASS.

BUT THERE ARE A FEW THINGS I MUST PREPARE BEFORE MY DEATH...

MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH IS WEI YAN'S REBELLION. MY PRESENCE ALONE HAS KEPT HIM IN CHECK UNTIL NOW, BUT ONCE I'M GONE, HE WILL NOT HESITATE ANYMORE.

Y-YES, SIR.

IN THIS POUCH CONTAINS DIRECTIONS ON HOW TO HANDLE WEI YAN'S REBELLION. OPEN IT WHEN HE REBELS AND THE SITUATION IS DIRE.

COUGH! COUGH!

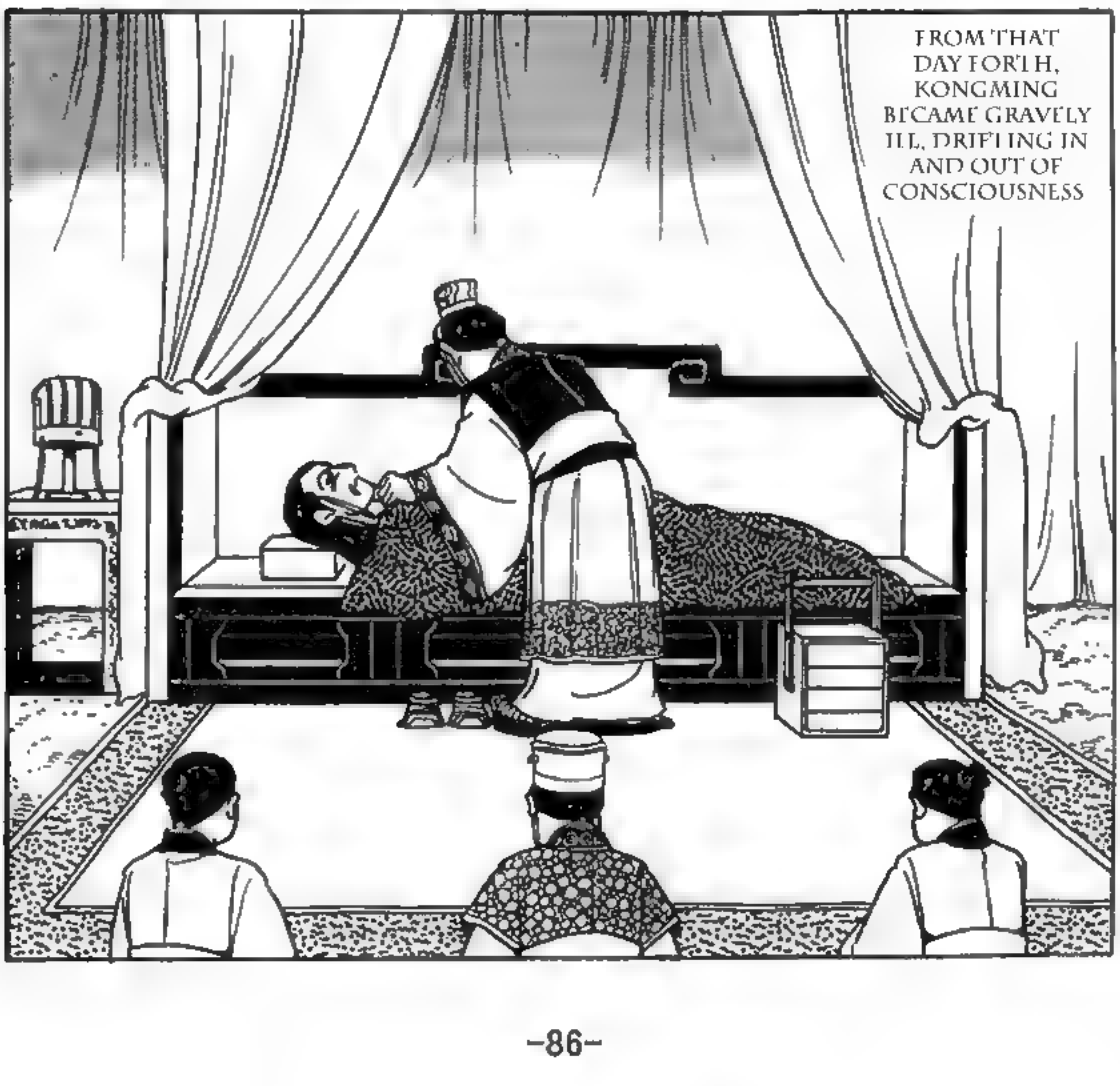
MNF-

DOCTOR! WE NEED A DOCTOR!

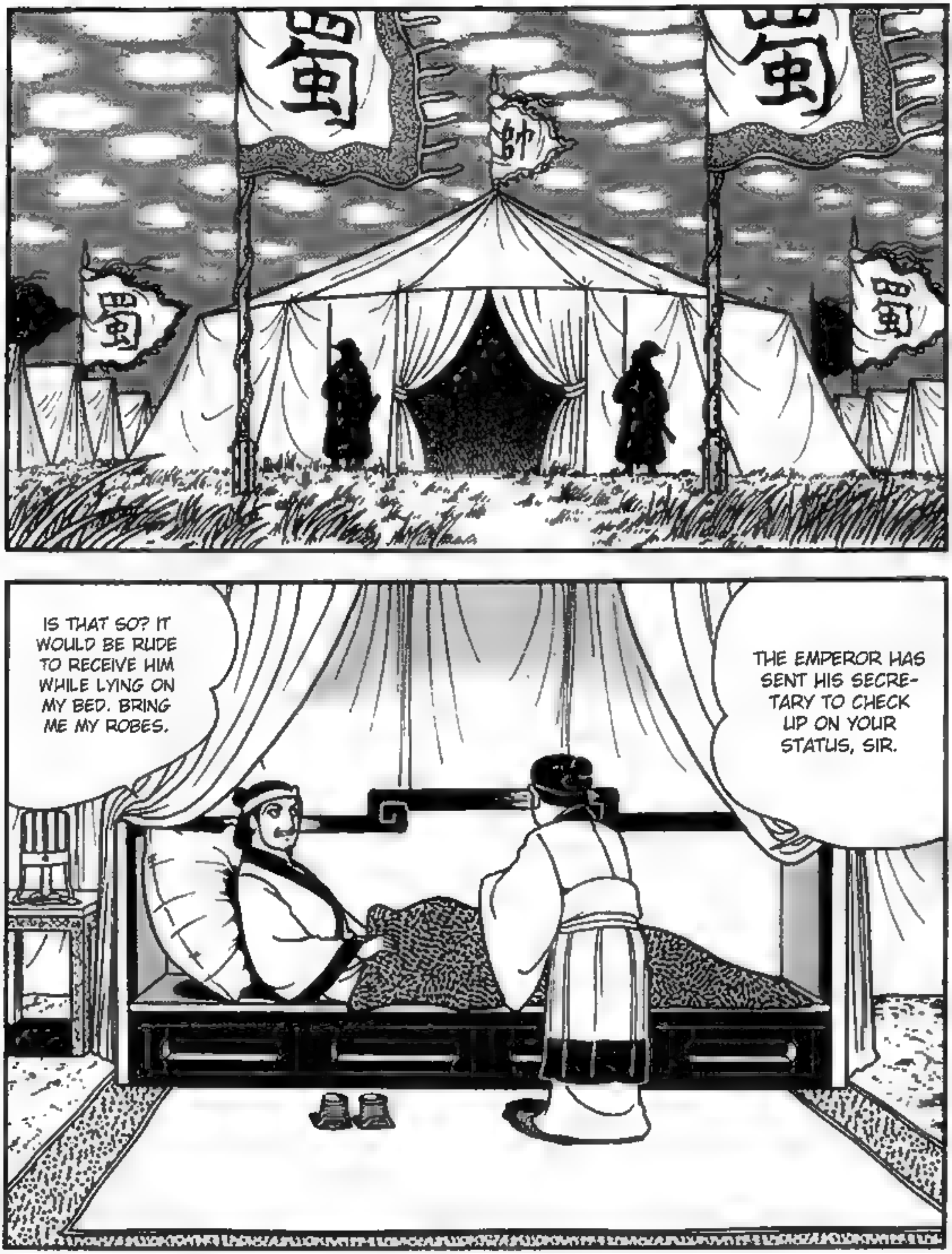
CHANCELLOR!

AHH!

PUT HIM ON THE BED AT ONCE!


FROM THAT DAY FORTH, KONGMING BECAME GRAVELY ILL, DRIFTING IN AND OUT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

AUTUMN WINDS OF WUZHANG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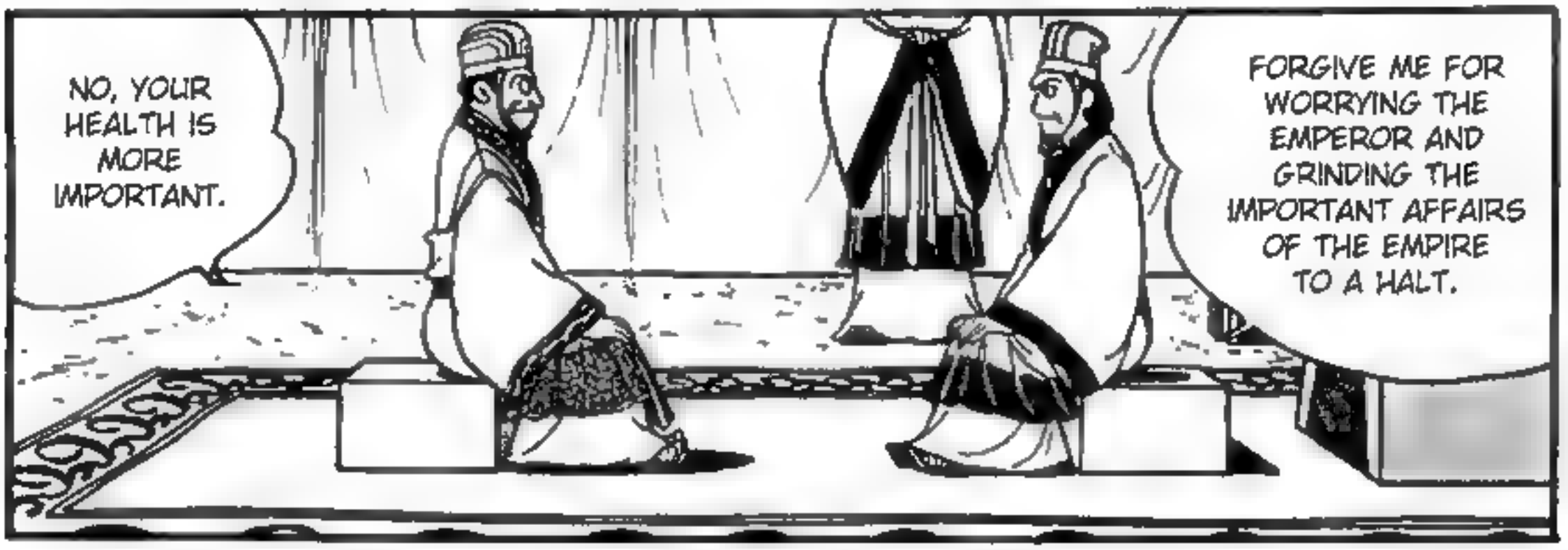
IS THAT SO? IT WOULD BE RUDE TO RECEIVE HIM WHILE LYING ON MY BED. BRING ME MY ROBES.
THE EMPEROR HAS SENT HIS SECRETARY TO CHECK UP ON YOUR STATUS, SIR.

HIS MAJESTY URGENTLY SENT ME HERE UPON RECEIVING NEWS THAT YOU HAD FALLEN ILL.
GREETINGS, LI FU.


NO, YOUR HEALTH IS MORE IMPORTANT.
FORGIVE ME FOR WORRYING THE EMPEROR AND GRINDING THE IMPORTANT AFFAIRS OF THE EMPIRE TO A HALT.

Y-YES, SIR.

LI FU, PLEASE CONSIDER MY FOLLOWING STATEMENT AS MY WILL AND LISTEN CAREFULLY.

I HAVE PASSED DOWN MY KNOWLEDGE OF WAR TO JIANG WEI. HE WILL SURELY BE OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO SHU'S DEFENSE IN THE FUTURE.

OF COURSE.

ONCE I PASS, MAKE SURE ALL THE OTHER HIGH-RANKING MINISTERS STICK TO THEIR DUTIES AS NOW, AND THOSE I'VE APPOINTED OR PLACED IN POWER MUST NOT BE BROUGHT DOWN OR MADE PREY TO PETTY POWER STRUGGLES.

OTHERS, LIKE WANG PING, ZHANG NI, ZHANG YI, WU YI, AND MA DAI ARE LOYAL AND DEPENDABLE GENERALS THAT SHOULD BE HEAVILY USED IN THE FUTURE. ESPECIALLY MA DAI.

WHAT IF HE WERE TO REFUSE?

I WISH FOR JIANG WAN TO TAKE MY PLACE AS THE NEXT CHANCELLOR.

YES, SIR.

PLEASE CONVEY WHAT I JUST SAID BACK TO HIS MAJESTY.

THEN MY NEXT CHOICE IS FEI YI.

SIR!?

MN-

PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR BED!

PLEASE PROTECT HIS MAJESTY WITH THE HELP OF ALL.

YES, SIR...

NO, YOUR HEALTH COMES BEFORE ANYTHING, SIR.

FORGIVE ME FOR RECEIVING HIS MAJESTY'S CHIEF SECRETARY WHILE LYING SICK ON MY BED.

UPON LEARNING THAT KONGMING WAS NEAR HIS DEATH LI FU QUICKLY RODE BACK TO TELL LIU SHAN KONGMING'S LAST WORDS.

HERE IS YOUR MEDICINE, SIR.

YES, SIR.

CALL YANG YI HERE.

RIGHT.

THE CHANCELLOR CALLS FOR YOUR PRESENCE, SECRETARY YANG YI.

COME CLOSER.

YANG YI HERE AT YOUR SERVICE, SIR.

PLEASE ADVISE HIM ACCORDING TO THE STRICT WAYS OF THE FORMER EMPEROR AND RECOMMEND FOLLOWING HIS WILL.

HIS MAJESTY HAS TASTED MANY LUXURIES OF AN EMPEROR, BUT UNLIKE HIS FATHER, HE HAS NOT TASTED THE HARSH REALITIES OF LIFE. THUS, HE HAS YET TO DEVELOP A FIRM GRASP OF GOVERNANCE AND AN ATTENTION TO THE PEOPLE'S HEARTS.

THANK YOU, YANG YI. HEARING YOUR RESPONSE GIVES ME RELIEF.

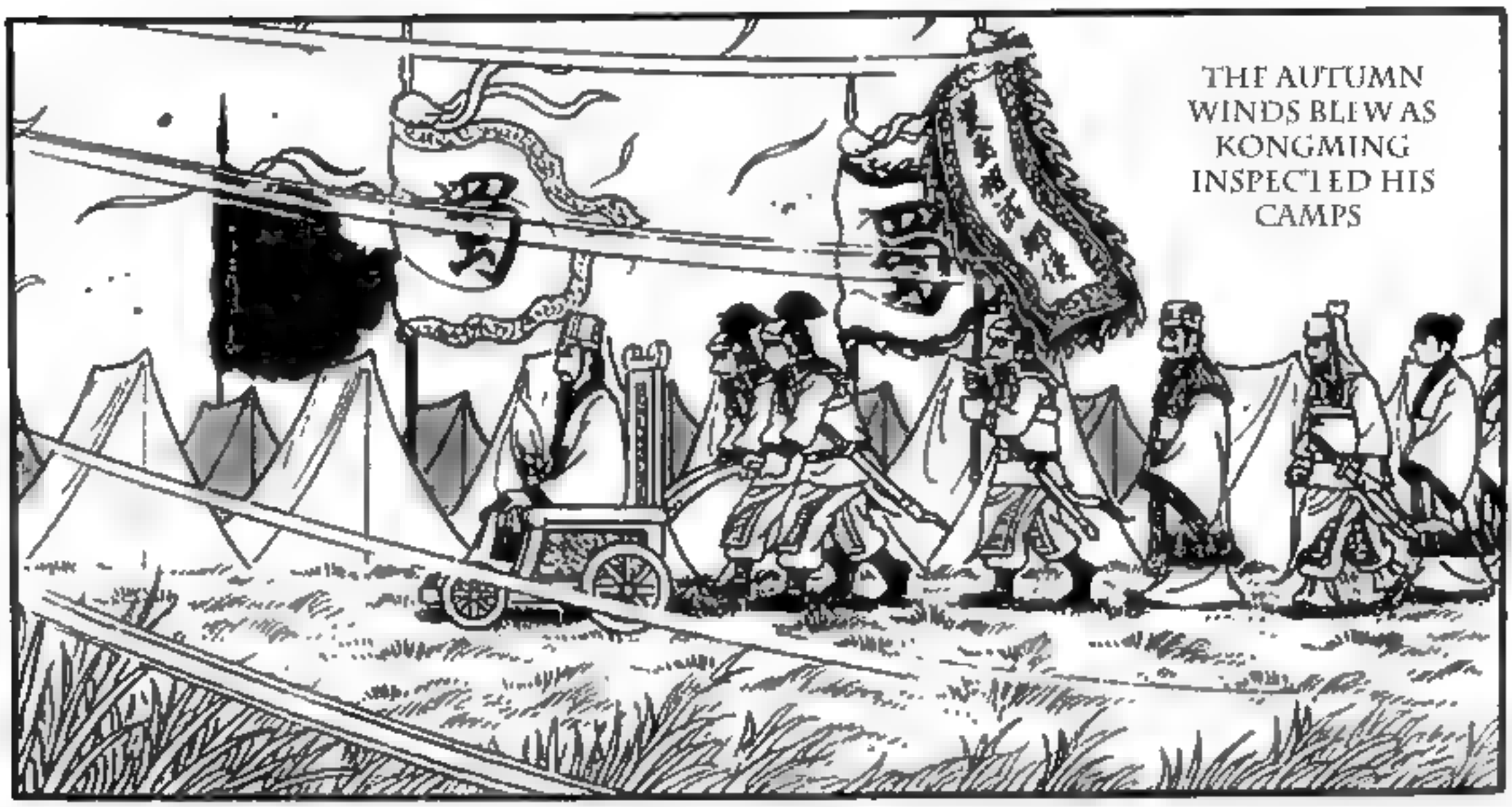
I PROMISE, CHANCELLOR.

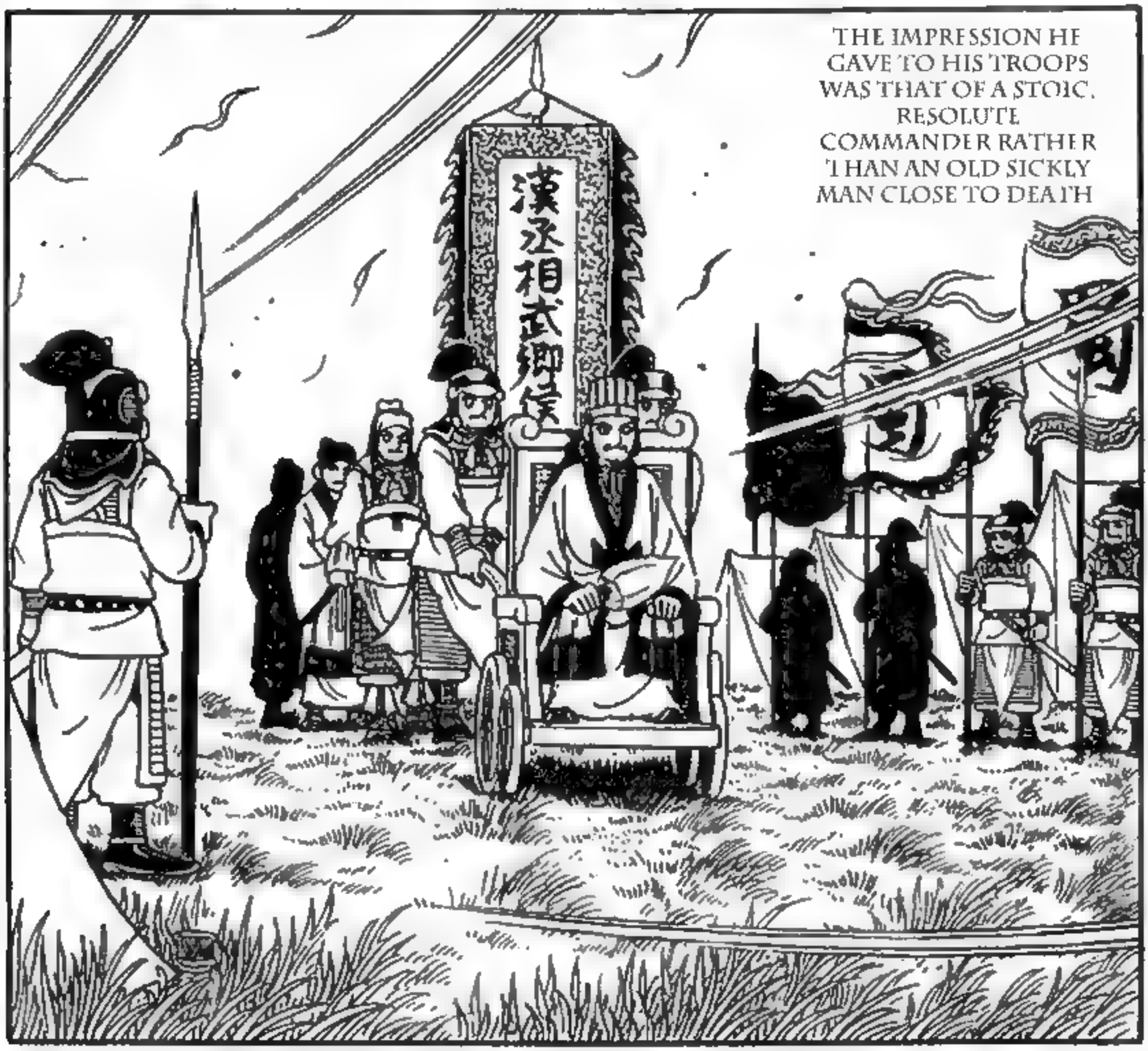
W-WHAT!?

ATTENDANT! SEAT ME ON MY CHARIOT.

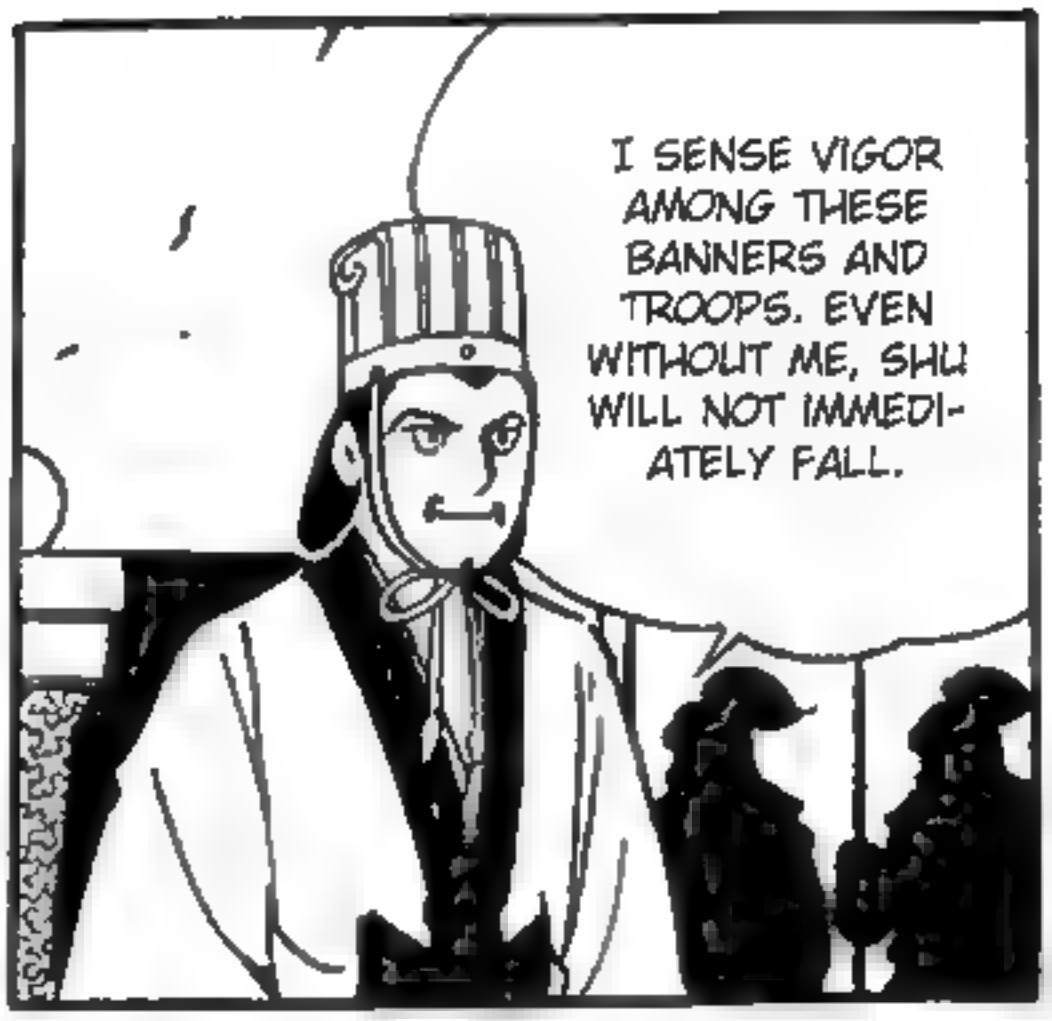
I WISH TO INSPECT THE CAMPS, AND I MUST RELIEVE THE TROOPS' ANXIETY BY SHOWING MY FACE.

NOW LET'S GO.


THE AUTUMN WINDS BLEW AS KONGMING INSPECTED HIS CAMPS


THE IMPRESSION HE GAVE TO HIS TROOPS WAS THAT OF A STOIC, RESOLUTE COMMANDER RATHER THAN AN OLD SICKLY MAN CLOSE TO DEATH

WHAT A SHORT THING A HUMAN LIFE IS...


I SENSE VIGOR AMONG THESE BANNERS AND TROOPS. EVEN WITHOUT ME, SHU WILL NOT IMMEDIATELY FALL.

I WONDER JUST HOW FAR THESE BLUE SKIES STRETCH TO...?

THOSE WHO UNDERSTOOD THE CHANCELLOR'S TIRELESS BUT FRUITLESS STRUGGLE IN LIFE WEPT SILENT TEARS AS THEY SAW HIM RESIGNED TO HIS ULTIMATE FATE

.....

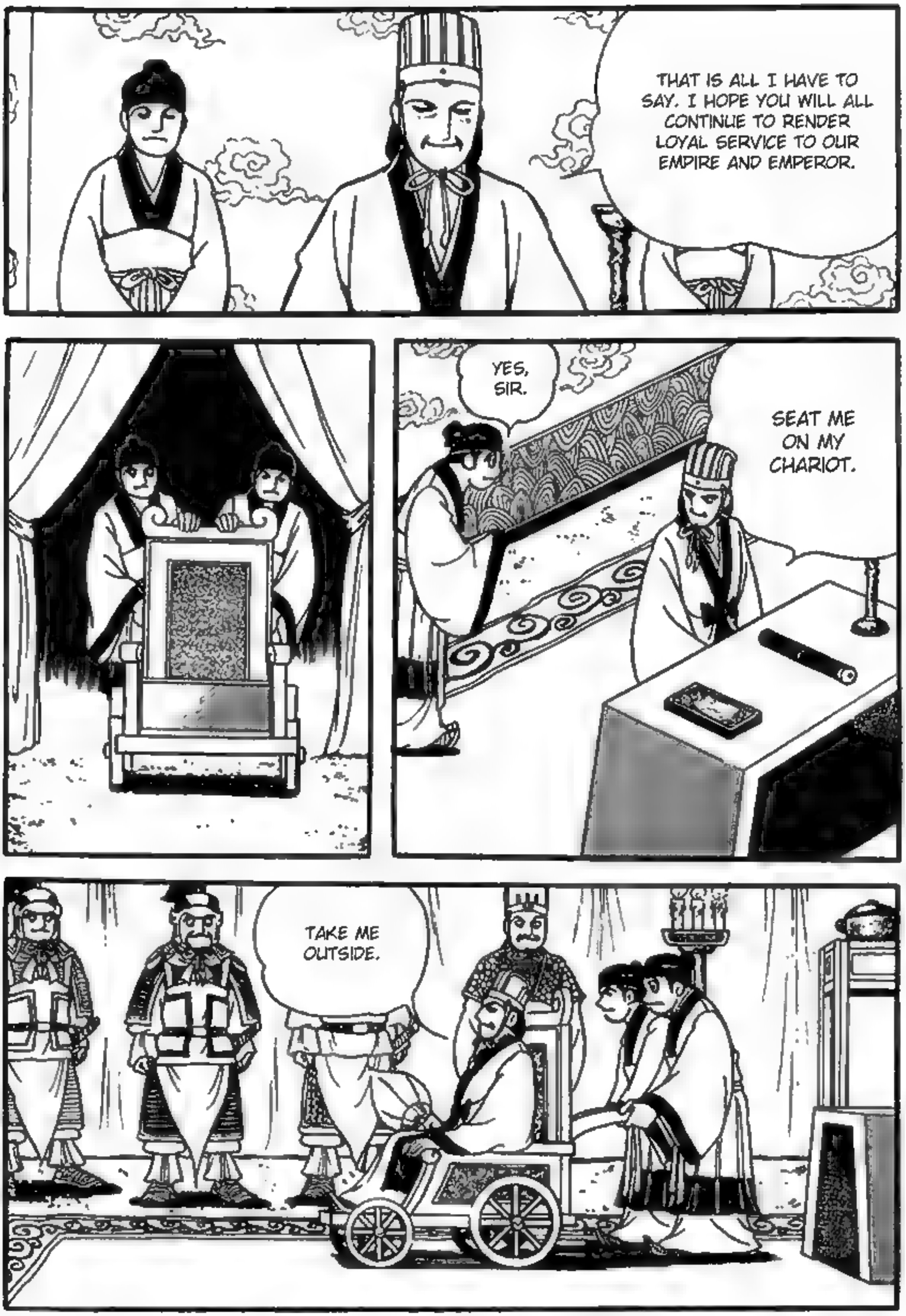
YANG YI, TAKE THIS
TO THE EMPEROR.
IT IS MY WILL.

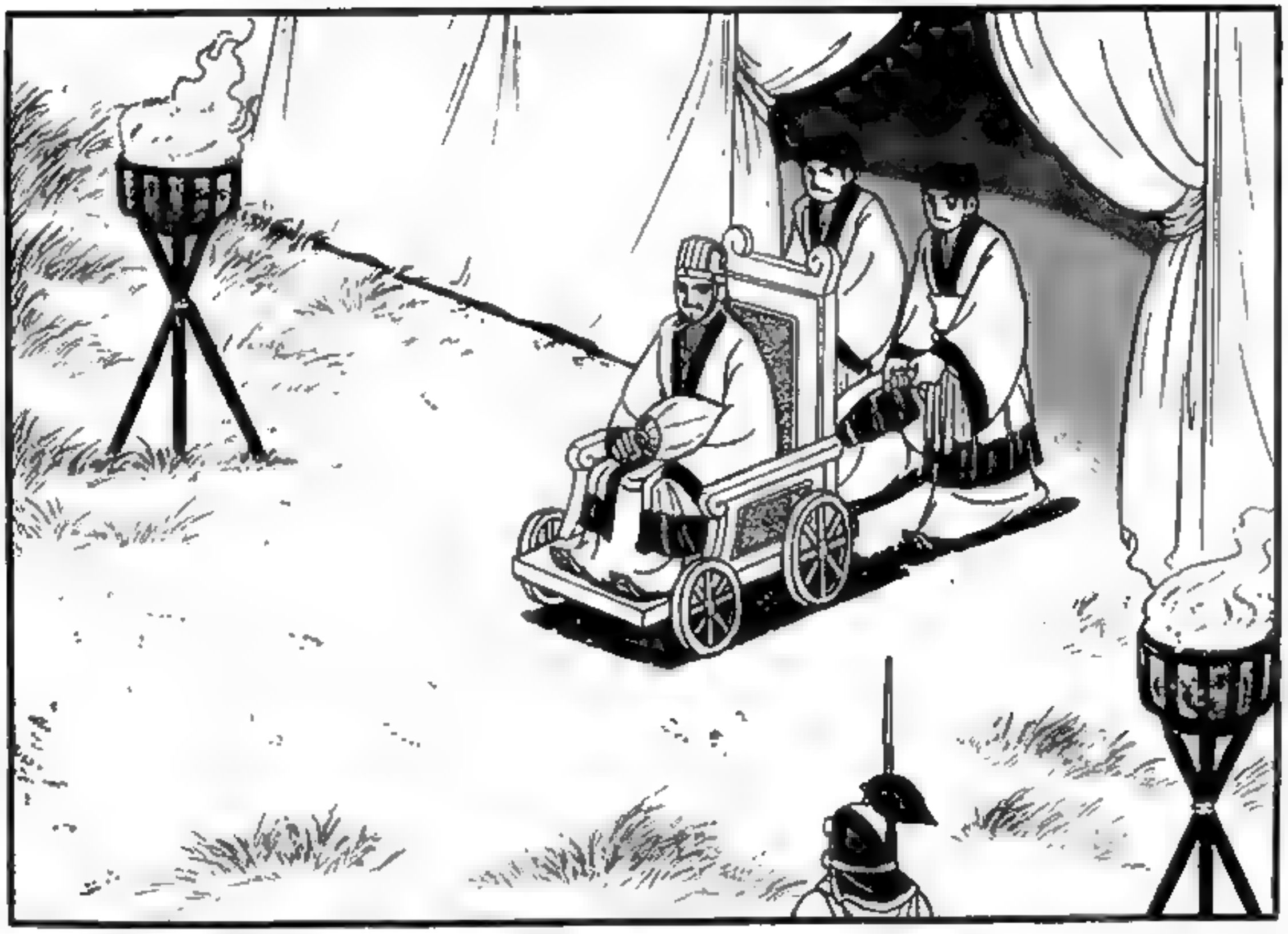
WHEN I PASS, MY DEATH MUST NOT BE PUBLICALLY MOURNED, OR ELSE SIMA YI WILL LAUNCH A FULL-OUT ATTACK.

IF SIMA YI ATTACKS, PLACE THIS WOODEN FIGURE AT THE FRONT OF OUR CAMPS AND HE WILL LIKELY RETREAT.

I'VE ALREADY HAD TWO CARPENTERS WORK ON A WOODEN REPLICA OF MY FIGURE FOR THIS OCCASION.

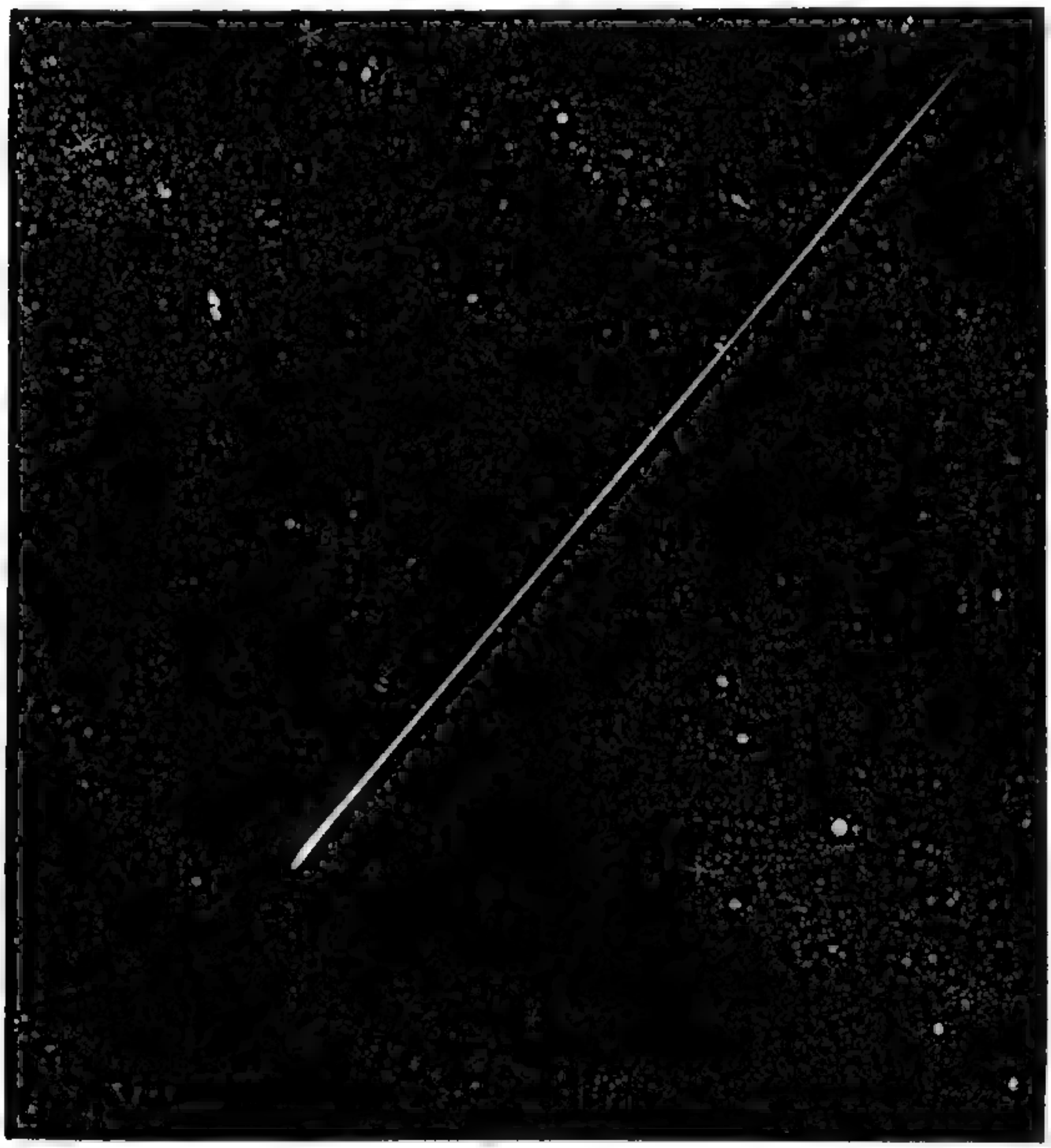
THAT WILL GIVE ENOUGH TIME FOR OUR ARMY TO SAFELY WITHDRAW, BEGINNING WITH OUR REARMOST DIVISIONS.


THAT IS ALL I HAVE TO SAY. I HOPE YOU WILL ALL CONTINUE TO RENDER LOYAL SERVICE TO OUR EMPIRE AND EMPEROR.
YES, SIR.
SEAT ME ON MY CHARIOT.
TAKE ME OUTSIDE.

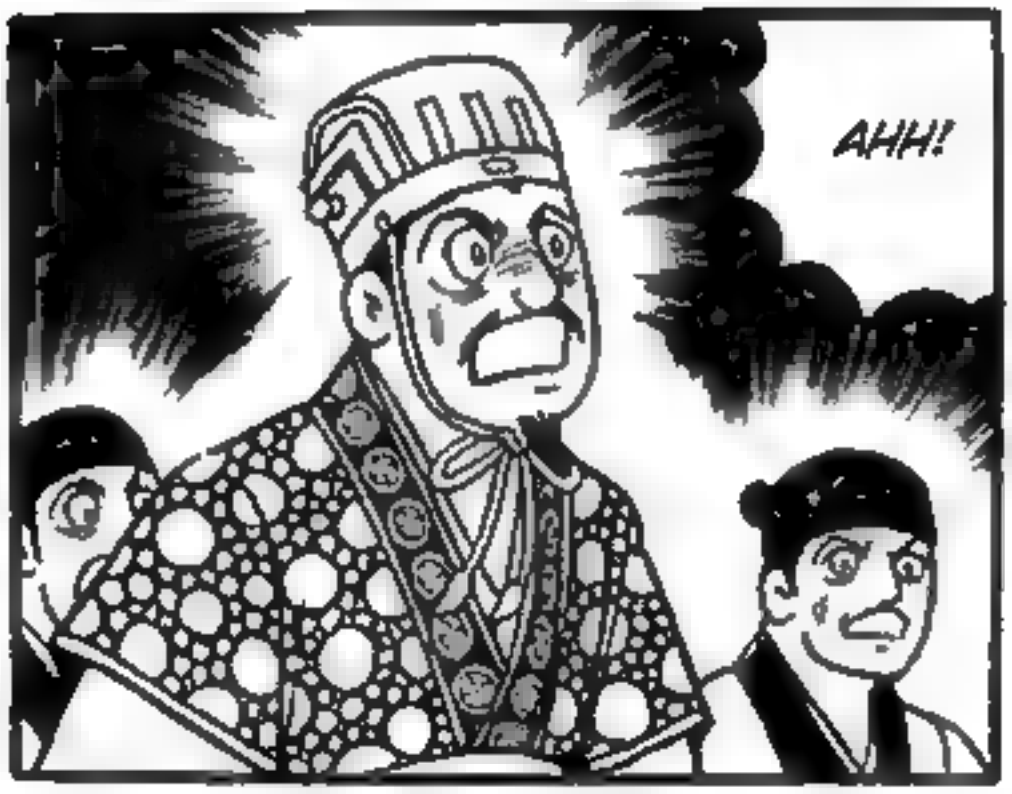


LOOK! THAT STAR OVER THERE IS MY STAR. IT APPEARS TO BE GIVING OFF ITS LAST BURST OF LIGHT.

STILL,
IT WILL
SOON
FALL.



AGHH!

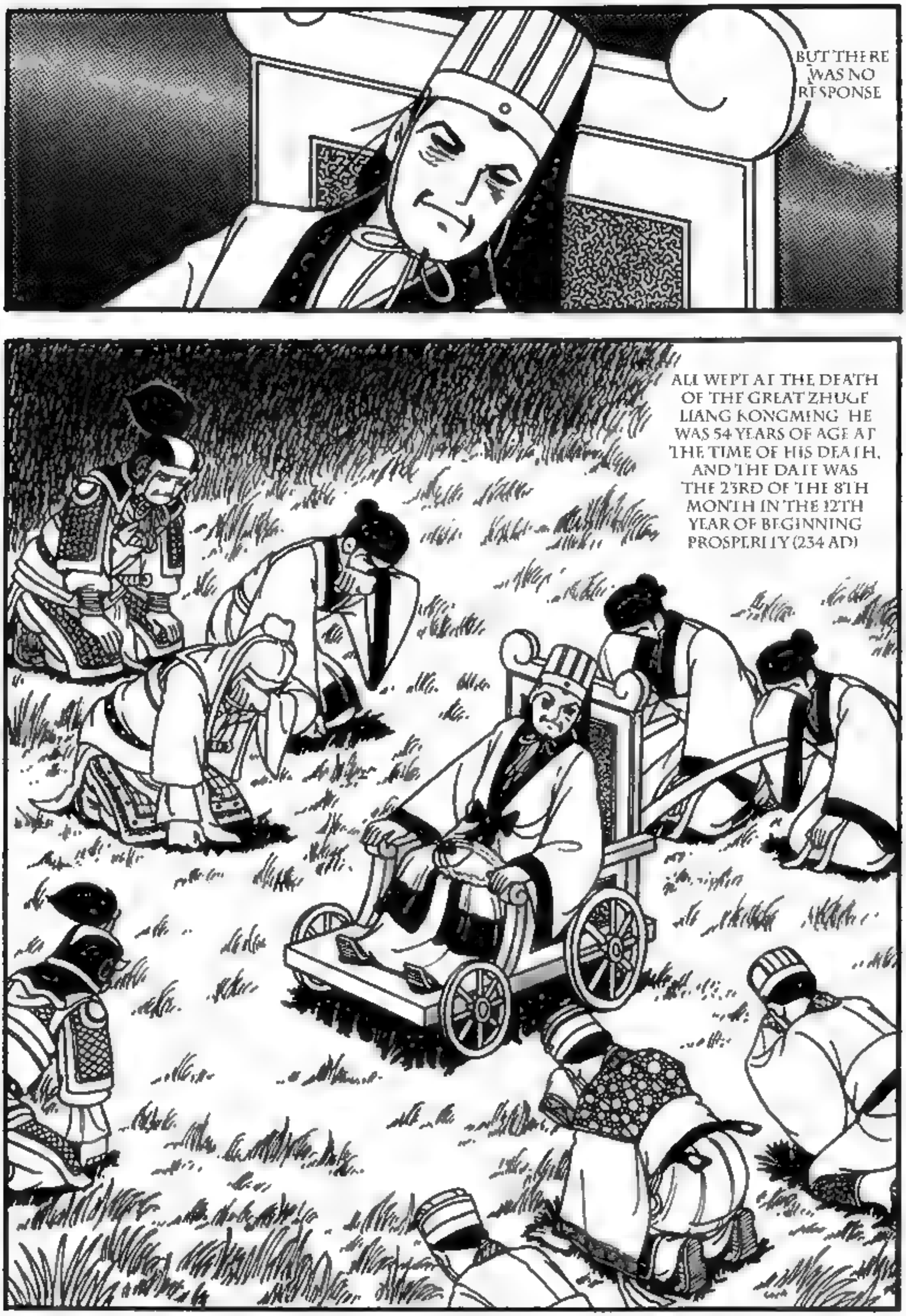

AHH!

HM!?

AH!

SIR!

CHAN-
CELLOR!


BUT THERE WAS NO RESPONSE
ALL WEPT AT THE DEATH OF THE GREAT ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING HE WAS 54 YEARS OF AGE AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH, AND THE DATE WAS THE 23RD OF THE 8TH MONTH IN THE 12TH YEAR OF BEGINNING PROSPERITY (234 AD)

OF THE MANY
HEROES THAT
FOUGHT TO
RESTORE THE
HAN

ZHANG
FEI.

GUAN
YU.

LIU BEI

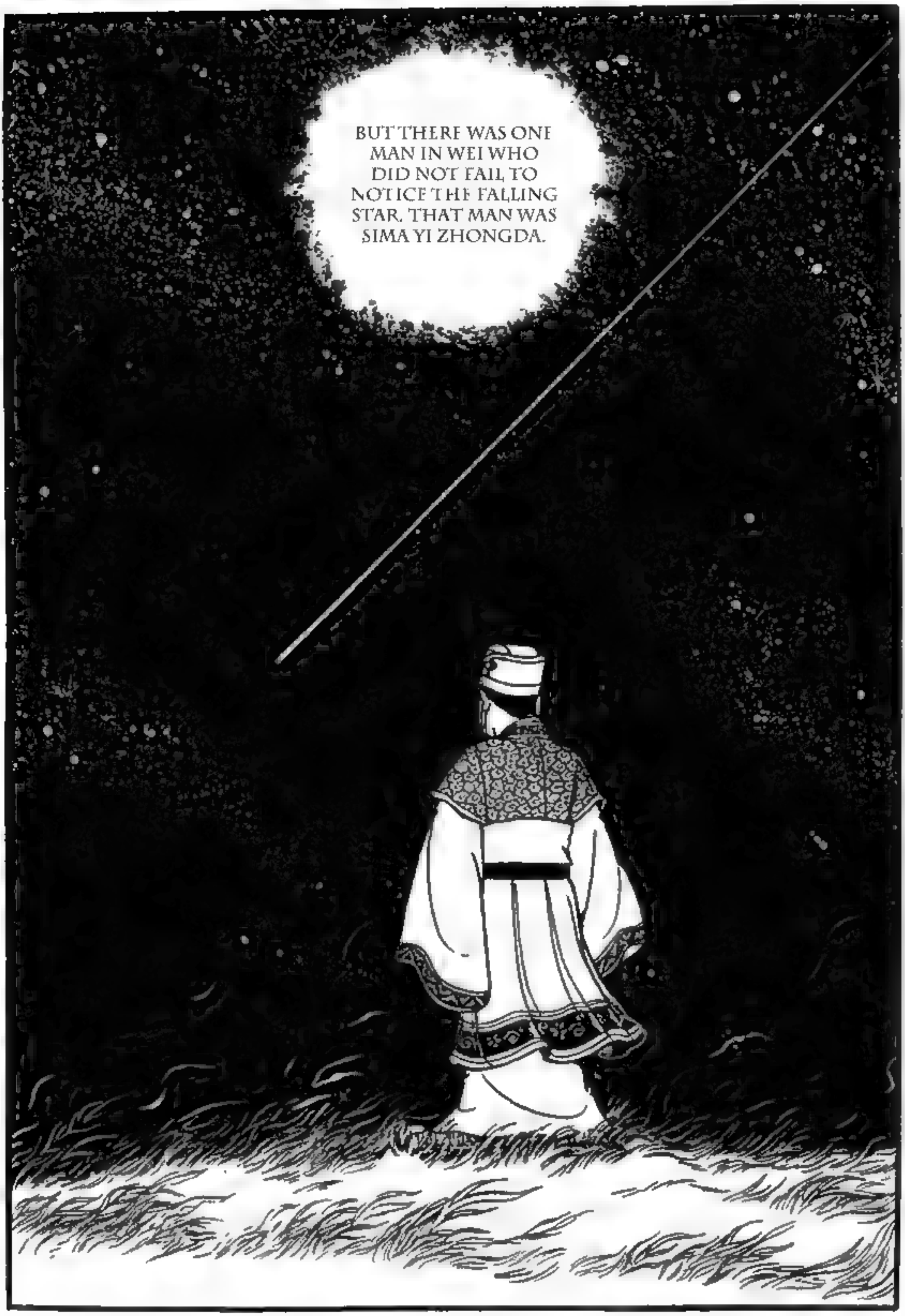
MA
CHAO,

ZHAO YUN,

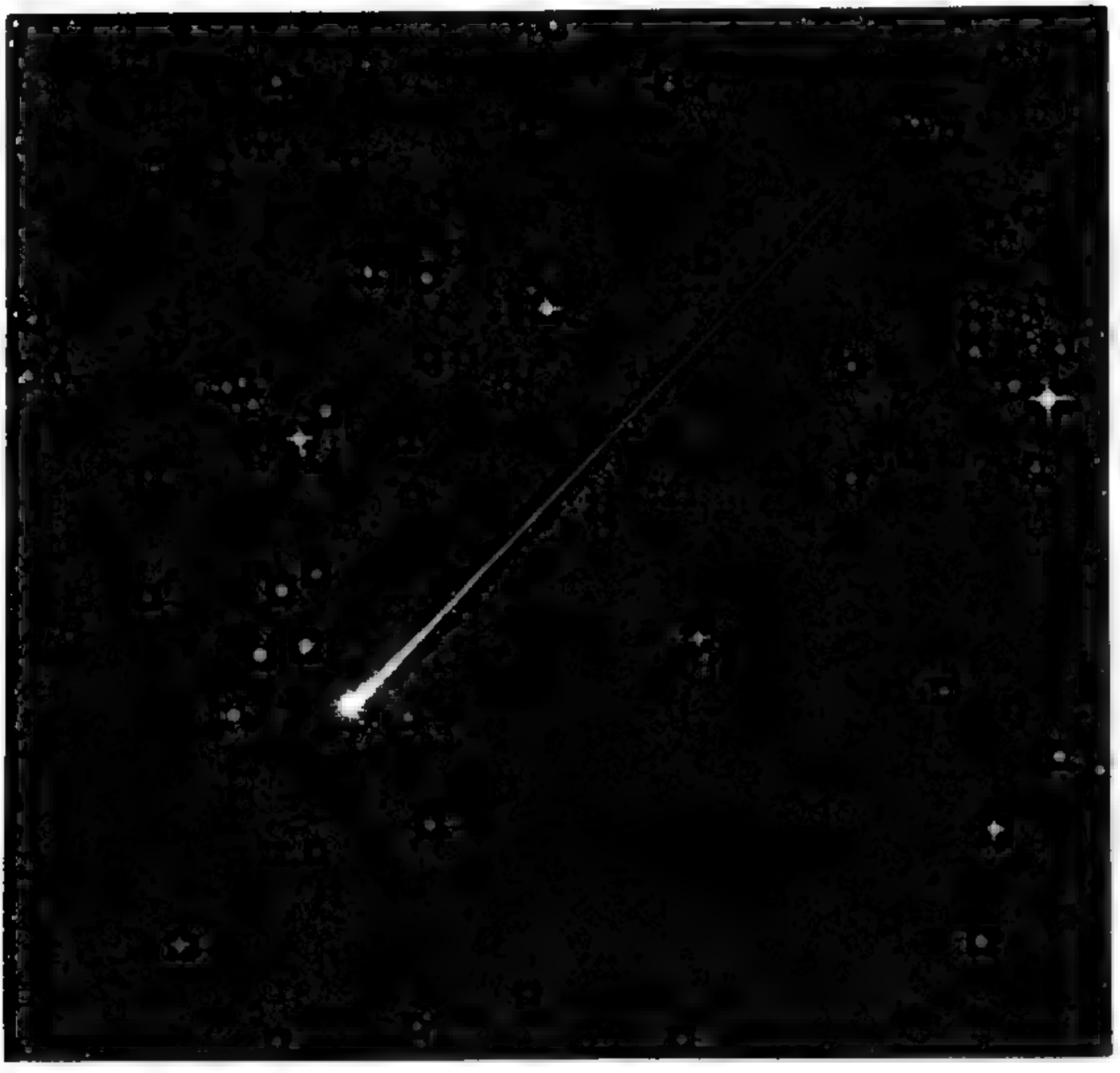
AND MANY
OTHERS

THE LAST GREAT
HERO HAD
FINALLY FALLEN

AS PER KONGMING'S WISHES, HIS DEATH WAS KEPT SECRET AND THE ARMY BEGAN TO WITHDRAW, BEGINNING WITH THE REARMOST DIVISIONS


BUT THERE WAS ONE MAN IN WEI WHO DID NOT FAIL TO NOTICE THE FALLING STAR. THAT MAN WAS SIMA YI ZHONGDA.

HORN DREAM



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WHAT!?

KONGMING IS DEAD! KONGMING IS DEAD!

KONGMING'S STAR JUST FELL FROM THE SKY!

HOW CAN YOU KNOW THIS, FATHER?

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, FATHER, CONCLUDING THAT KONGMING IS DEAD UPON OBSERVING HIS STAR FALLING SEEMS A LITTLE PREMATURE.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR AN ALL-OUT OFFENSIVE! VICTORY WILL BE OURS!

NO, I AM MERELY SAYING IT DOES NOT HURT TO BE CAUTIOUS. JUST IMAGINE WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF WE WERE TO BE PULLED INTO ANOTHER TRAP.

ARE YOU SAYING YOU DON'T TRUST MY ASTROLOGICAL EXPERTISE?

I AGREE. IF KONGMING IS TRULY DEAD, THEN THE SHU ARMY CAN BE CRUSHED ANY TIME. WHAT WE NEED TO PRIORITIZE FIRST IS CONFIRMING HIS DEATH.

SEND OUT SPIES AT ONCE!

HMM... I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT. THE ENEMIES CAN BE BEATEN ANY TIME IF KONGMING REALLY IS DEAD.

WEI SPIES QUICKLY VENTURED INTO ENEMY TERRITORY TO VERIFY KONGMING'S STATUS

MEANWHILE AT WEI YAN'S CAMP

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YOU SEEM TO BE TROUBLED, SIR. MAY I ASK WHY?

ZHAO ZHI!

YES, IN THE DREAM, I SPROUTED HORNS ON MY HEAD.

A STRANGE DREAM?

I HAD A RATHER STRANGE DREAM LAST NIGHT, AND I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT WHAT IT MAY MEAN.

HORNS?

HAHA, THAT IS A VERY AUSPICIOUS DREAM, SIR.

IS THIS A GOOD DREAM OR IS IT AN ILL OMEN?

SO FOR A GENERAL LIKE YOU TO DREAM OF SPROUTING HORNS MEANS THAT YOU WILL ASCEND LIKE DRAGONS AND JILIN.

BOTH DRAGONS AND JILIN HAVE HORNS,

IT IS!?

HAHAHA! YOUR EXPLANATION HAS LIFTED MY SPIRITS!

I HAD NO IDEA HORNS WERE SUCH GOOD LUCK!

I'M CERTAIN YOU WILL SOON FIND YOURSELF RISING THROUGH THE RANKS.

YES, OF COURSE.

IF THAT IS ALL, I WILL EXCUSE MYSELF NOW.

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IS HE STILL SPEAKING ILL OF THE FORMER CHANCEL-LOR?

NO, HE WAS LOCKED IN DEEP THOUGHT.

I JUST HAD A CHAT WITH GENERAL WEI YAN.

ZHAO ZHI, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

HE DREAMT LAST NIGHT OF SPROUT-ING HORNS ON HIS HEAD AND HE WAS WONDERING IF IT WAS AN AUSPICIOUS OR OMINOUS SIGN.

DEEP THOUGHT? ABOUT WHAT?

AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

THUS, I EXPLAINED HIS DREAM FOR HIM.

OH REALLY?

NO, NOT AT ALL.

I SAID THAT SINCE MAGICAL BEASTS LIKE DRAGONS AND JILIN HAVE HORNS, IT IS AN AUSPICIOUS DREAM THAT PORTENDS ONE RISING UP THROUGH THE RANK JUST AS THE BEASTS RISE UP TO THE HEAVENS.

SPROUTING HORNS IS ACTUALLY ONE OF THE MOST OMINOUS DREAMS ONE CAN HAVE, BUT I DID NOT WISH TO TELL WEI YAN THE TRUTH, LEST HE TAKE HIS ANGER OUT AT ME.

THE CHARACTER FOR "HORN" (角) IS MADE BY COMBINING "BLADE" (刀) AND "USE" (用). THUS, DREAMING OF HORNS ON YOUR HEAD MEANS THAT A BLADE WILL BE USED ON YOUR HEAD.

OMINOUS? WHY?

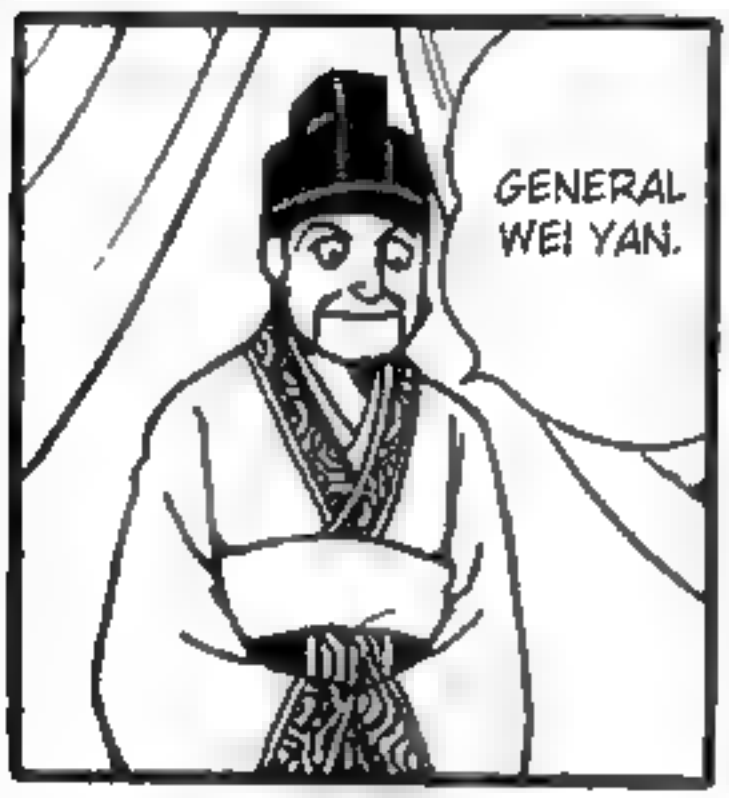
ABOUT THE DREAM, YOU MEAN?

DON'T TELL ANYONE ELSE WHAT YOU JUST SAID!

THANK YOU.

OF COURSE. MY LIPS ARE SEALED, FEI YI.

A DREAM OF HORNS...


GENERAL WEI YAN.

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EVENING, FEI YI.

TRAGIC?
I BRING TRAGIC NEWS.

WHAT!?

THE CHANCELLOR PASSED AWAY LAST NIGHT.

THE CHANCELLOR FORBID PUBLIC MOURNING TO HIDE HIS DEATH FROM THE ENEMIES.

WHEN IS THE MOURNING THEN?

I SEE... SO HE FINALLY PASSED ON...

YANG YI!?

YANG YI.

THEN WHO IS ACTING AS THE TEMPORARY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF?

THOSE WERE THE CHANCELLOR'S ORDERS BEFORE HE DIED...

YANG YI IS A CIVIL OFFICER! WHAT WOULD HE KNOW ABOUT LEADING TROOPS!?

I'M AFRAID THE CHANCELLOR MADE JIANG WEI HIS SUCCESSOR IN MILITARY AFFAIRS.

IS IT NOT OBVIOUS TO ALL THAT I'M THE ONLY ONE WITH ENOUGH EXPERIENCE AND LEADERSHIP TO COMMAND THE TROOPS NOW THAT THE CHANCELLOR IS DEAD!?

THE LIKES OF YANG YI IS ONLY GOOD ENOUGH TO ESCORT OUR CHANCELLOR'S COFFIN BACK TO SHU!

JIANG WEI!? WHAT DOES THAT LITTLE BRAT KNOW MORE THAN ME!? I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN LEAD THE SHU ARMY TO VICTORY OVER WEI!

WHAT HAS 6 CAMPAIGNS OF HIS STRATEGY GOTTEN US, OTHER THAN ROUND TRIPS TO SHU AND QISHAN!? I KNOW HE TRIED TO KILL ME ALONG WITH SIMA YI AT GOURD VALLEY, JUST BECAUSE I HAD THE AUDACITY TO POINT OUT HIS STUBBORNNESS!

IF THE CHANCELLOR HAD LISTENED TO MY PLANS SINCE THE START, WE WOULD HAVE CAPTURED CHANG'AN LONG AGO!

BE THAT AS IT MAY, YANG YI HAS ALREADY ISSUED ORDERS FOR YOU TO HOLD THE REAR-GUARD WHILE OUR TROOPS WITHDRAW...

I AM THE VANGUARD GENERAL WHO CONQUERS THE WEST AND THE GREAT LORD OF NANZHENG! WHO CAN COMPETE WITH MY TITLES REWARDED FOR VALORIOUS MILITARY SERVICE!? CERTAINLY NOT A MERE CIVIL SECRETARIAT LIKE YANG YI!

I WILL DO WHAT'S BEST FOR SHU.

NOW ARE YOU WITH ME OR NOT!?

WITHDRAW!? PREPOSTEROUS! I WILL TAKE SUPREME COMMAND OF OUR TROOPS AND CONTINUE THE FIGHT!

YES, I KNOW THAT MUCH.

FIGHTING NOW AMONGST OURSELVES WILL ONLY GIVE SIMA YI A CHANCE TO STRIKE.

YOU'LL DO THAT FOR ME?

ALLOW ME TO GO AND CONVINCE HIM, SIR.

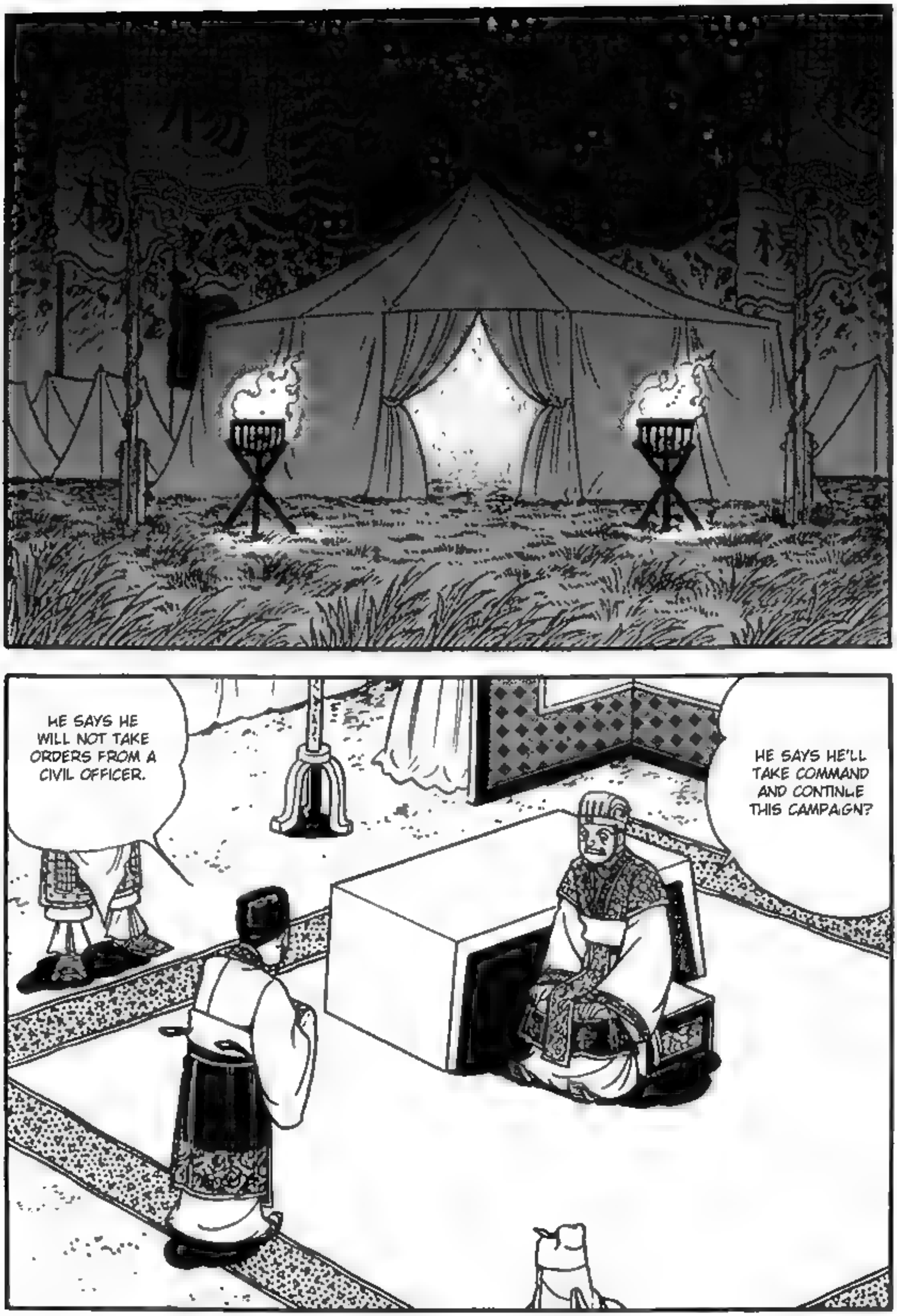
HOW DO YOU THINK YANG YI WILL REACT IF I DEMAND THAT HE HANDS OVER COMMAND OF THE TROOPS?

EXCELLENT. BUT IF WORDS FAIL, I WILL BE FORCED TO TAKE DECISIVE ACTION.

GOOD.

I WILL SEE WHAT I CAN DO, SIR.

WHAT SORDID AFFAIRS WE'RE IN UPON THE CHANCELLOR'S DEATH...


HE SAYS HE WILL NOT TAKE ORDERS FROM A CIVIL OFFICER.
HE SAYS HE'LL TAKE COMMAND AND CONTINUE THIS CAMPAIGN?

IN SUCH A SCENARIO, OUR ENTIRE ARMY MAY NOT RETURN ALIVE TO SHU! THE WHOLE REASON WHY THE CHANCELLOR TOLD US TO CONCEAL NEWS OF HIS DEATH WAS TO GIVE US TIME TO SAFELY RETREAT!

ONCE THEY LEARN THAT OUR CHANCELLOR IS NOW NO MORE, SIMA YI WILL ORDER AN ALL-OUT OFFENSIVE AND OVERWHELM US WITH SHEER NUMBERS!

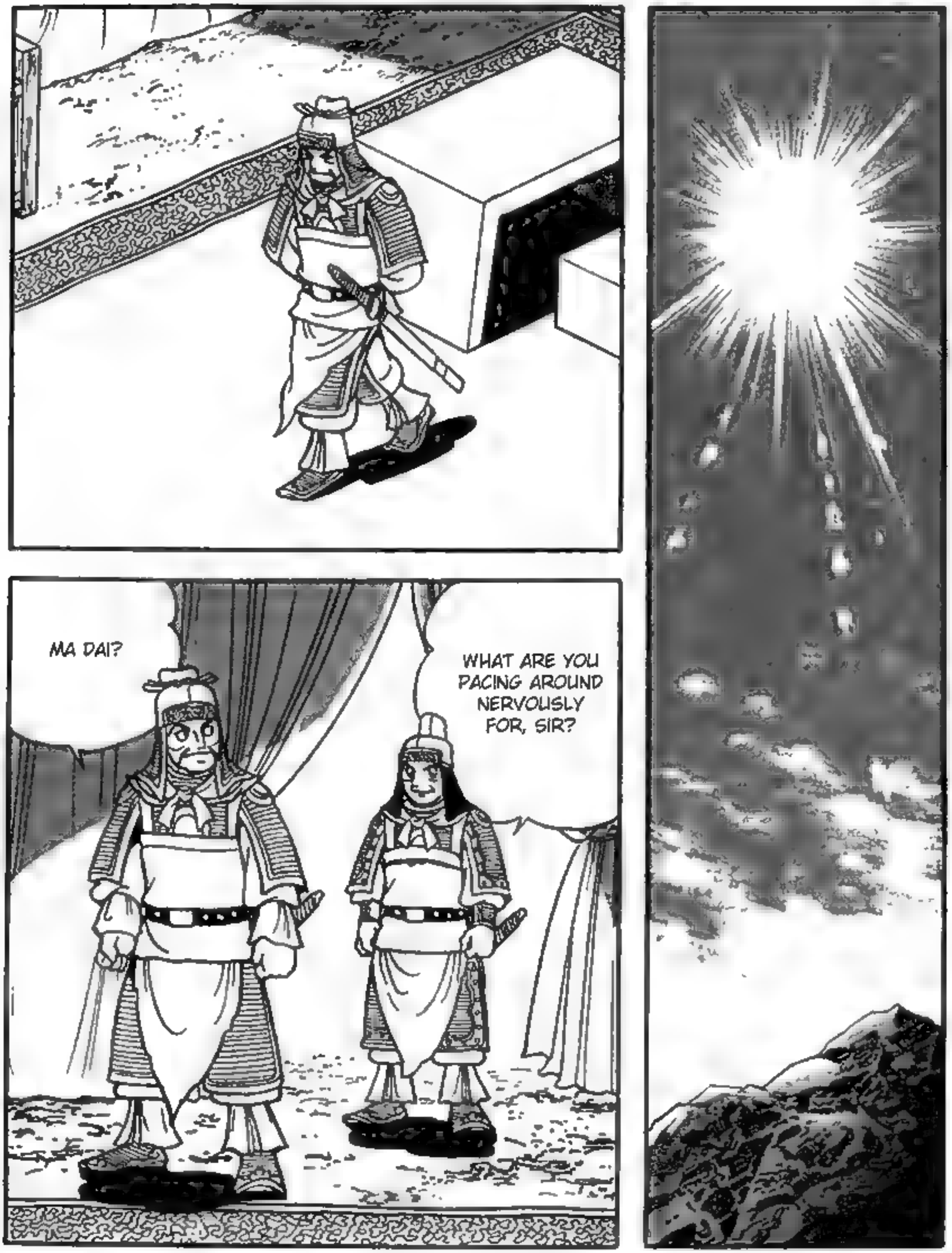
IS HE INSANE!? THE ONLY REASON THE WEI ARMY THAT IS THREE TIMES OUR NUMBER WAS HIDING IN THEIR FORTS AND CAMPS WAS BECAUSE OF THE CHANCELLOR'S CUNNING!

YES, WE MUST FOLLOW THE FORMER CHANCELLOR'S WILL.

JIANG WEI! YOU TAKE HOLD OF THE REARGUARD AND PREVENT ENEMY PURSUIT!

WEI YAN'S NUMEROUS DEEDS UP UNTIL NOW WERE ONLY POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE CHANCELLOR'S BRILLIANT PLANS! BUT IF HE STUBBORNLY REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT, THEN SO BE IT! HE CAN STAY HERE AND FIGHT WEI AT THE COST OF TREASON WHILE THE REST OF OUR FORCES RETREATS TO SHU!

THE DEAD CHASES AWAY THE LIVING



I NATURALLY OBJECTED, AS YANG YI IS A MERE CIVIL OFFICER.

FEI YI INFORMED ME LAST NIGHT THAT THE CHANCELLOR HAD PASSED AWAY AND THAT COMMAND HAD NOW FALLEN TO YANG YI.

WHAT? YOU MEAN YOU'RE NOT AWARE THAT OUR MAIN FORCES HAVE ALREADY STARTED THEIR RETREAT?

FEI YI SAID HE WOULD GO AND TRY TO CONVINCE YANG YI TO HAND OVER COMMAND TO ME, BUT I'VE YET TO HEAR ANYTHING.

YES, I THOUGHT THE TASK OF HOLDING OUT AS THE REARGUARD HAD FALLEN TO YOU, SIR.

WHAT!?

CURSE THAT WRETCHED FEI YI, PLAYING ME FOR A FOOL BY LEAVING US BEHIND!

THIS IS MY FIRST TIME HEARING THIS!

YES, SIR.

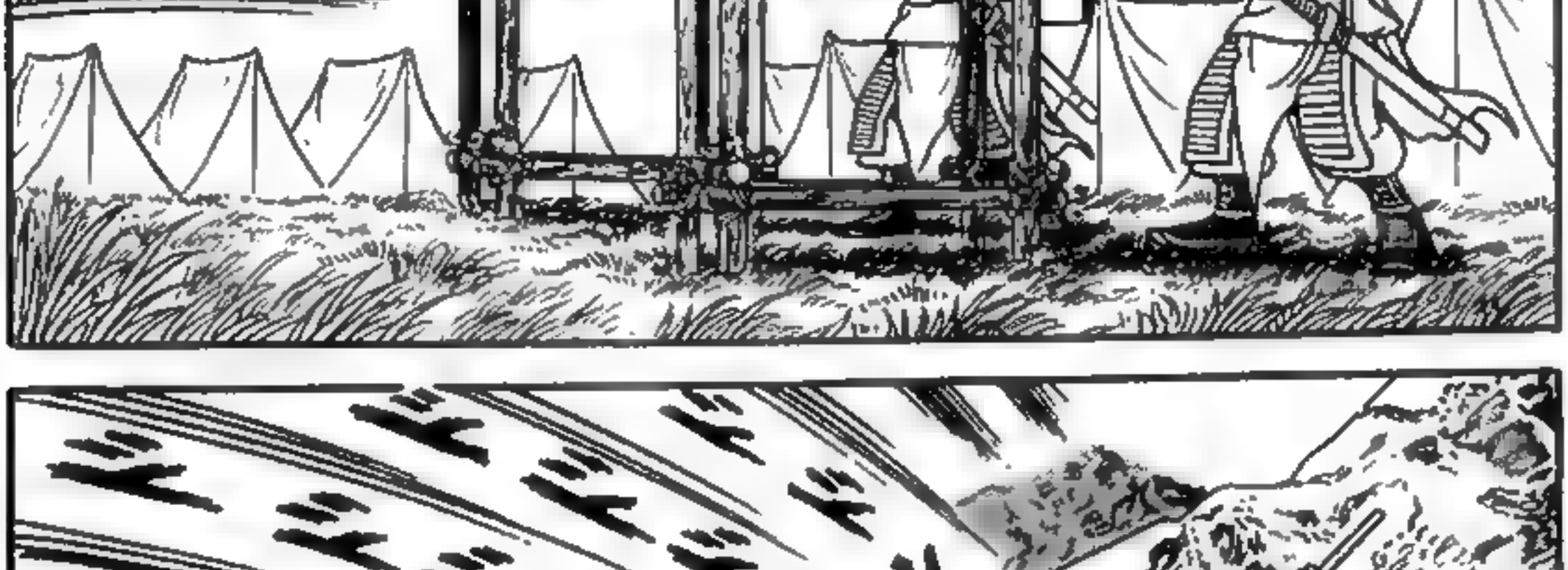
MA DAI! PREPARE OUR TROOPS TO WITHDRAW AT ONCE AS WELL! OUR FEW NUMBERS DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST THEIR HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS!

I SWEAR I'LL HAVE MY REVENGE ON BOTH FEI YI AND YANG YI!

WEI YAN'S TROOPS ABANDONED MUCH OF THEIR SUPPLIES TO RETREAT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

YES, WEI YAN'S TROOPS EVEN ABANDONED MUCH OF THEIR SUPPLIES TO WITHDRAW AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
THE ENEMIES HAVE BEGUN THEIR RETREAT!?
I KNEW IT! KONGMING IS DEAD!

YES, SIR.
WE CAN'T LET THIS CHANCE SLIP BY! I ORDER A PURSUIT AT ONCE!



AT LAST, THE WEI OFFICERS COULD LET OUT THEIR FRUSTRATION AS THEY STORMED INTO WUZHANG PLAINS TO CHASE AFTER THE SHU ARMY

LEADING THE PURSUIT WAS SIMA YI HIMSELF
司馬

IS IT NOT OBVIOUS WHY? A SHU ARMY WITHOUT KONGMING IS A TIGER WITHOUT FANGS. WE CAN EASILY CAPTURE OR KILL THEIR TROOPS WITH A RAPID PURSUIT. THIS WILL BE GLORIOUS!

FATHER, ARE YOU NOT RUSHING A LITTLE TOO MUCH? YOU DO NOT SEEM LIKE YOUR USUAL SELF.

DO NOT SPEAK IF YOU DO NOT KNOW THE WAYS OF WAR!

SIR! IF WE CONTINUE AT THIS PACE, WE MAY BE SEPARATED TOO FAR FROM THE REST OF OUR FORCES!

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YES, BUT LOOK AT THIS MESS. THEY CLEARLY LEFT IN AN AWFUL PANIC.

IT'S COMPLETELY EMPTY.

WHAT ABOUT YOU, FATHER?

YOU STAY HERE AND REGROUP WITH OUR REMAINING TROOPS BEFORE CONTINUING THE ADVANCE. THE ENEMIES WILL NOT HAVE GONE VERY FAR YET.

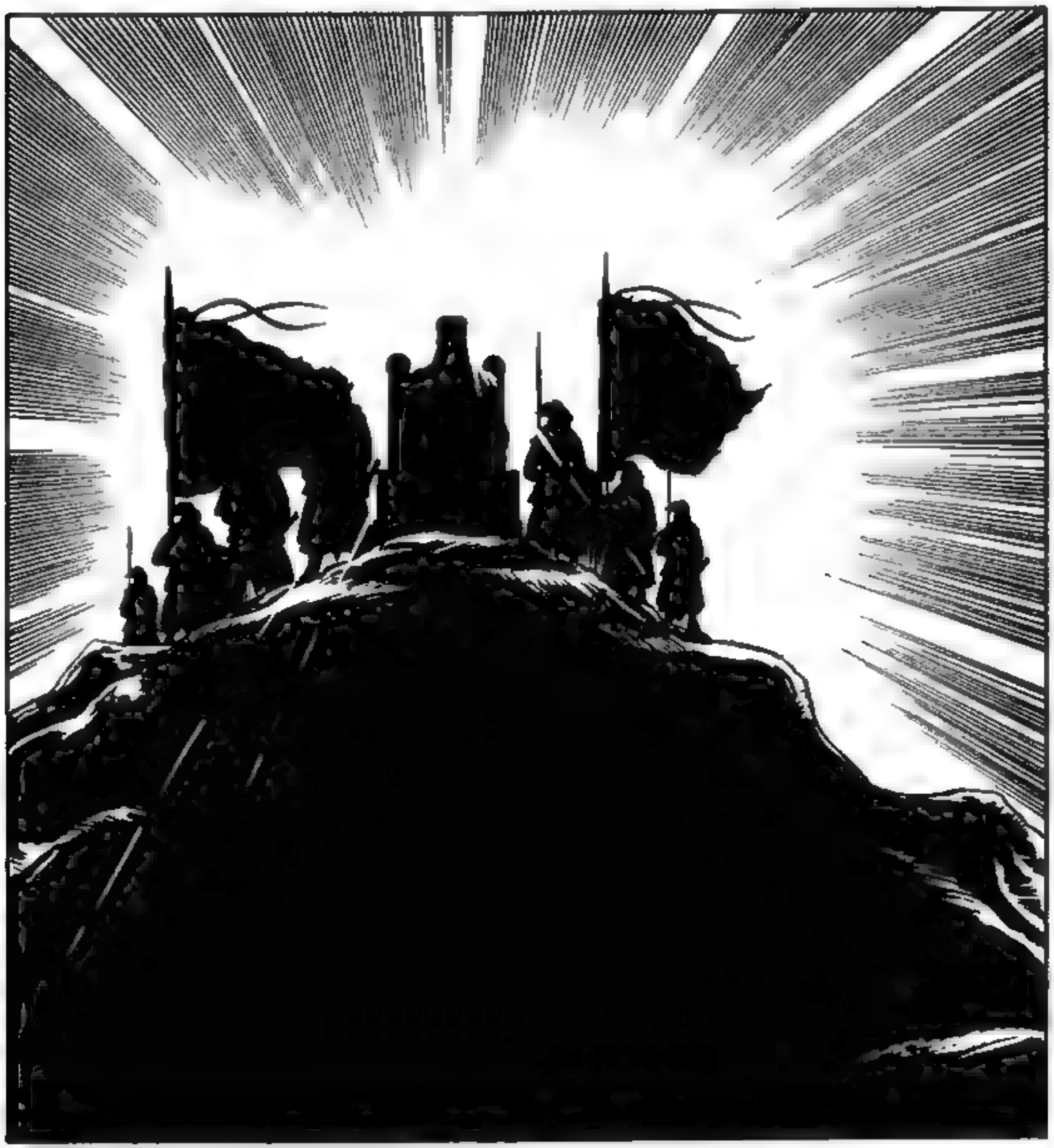
LET'S MOVE!

I WILL LEAD THE VANGUARD AND TRY TO SLOW DOWN OR OBSTRUCT THE ENEMIES.

THE ENEMIES ARE NOT FAR FROM HERE! WE CAN CATCH UP TO THEM IF WE HURRY!

AHHH!

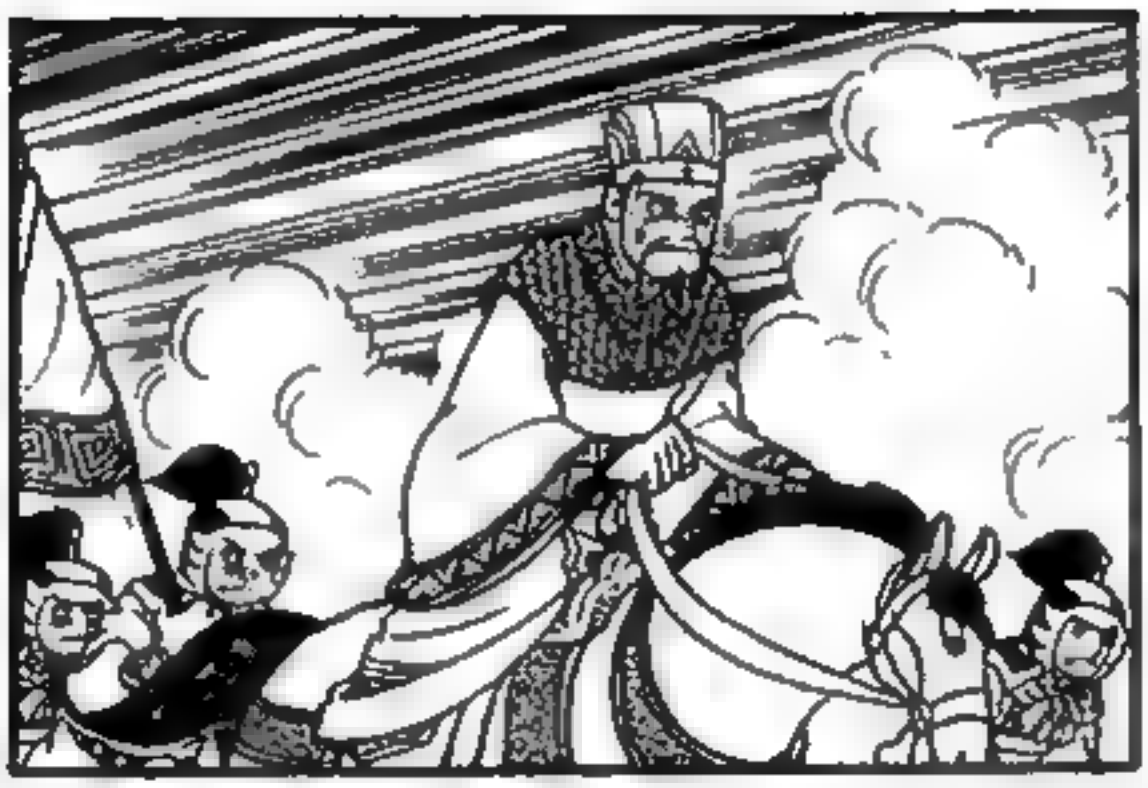
HIDDEN TROOPS?

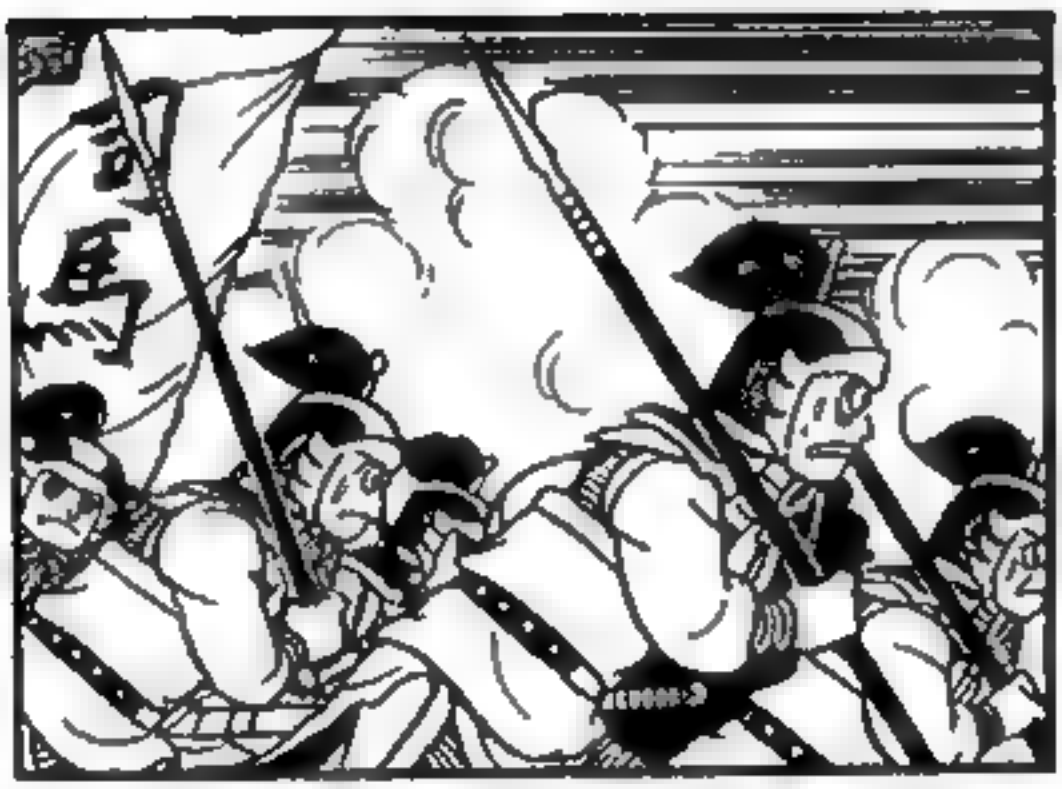


KONG-
MING!?

RETREAT! RETREAT! KONGMING HAS PREPARED A SECOND GOURD VALLEY FOR US!

T-THEN THIS WAS ALL ANOTHER PLOY TO LURE US OUT!?





NOW!
ATTACK!

WEI TROOPS AT THE FRONT TRIED TO TURN BACK, BUT THEY WERE PUSHED BY THEIR OWN TROOPS STILL RUSHING UP FROM BEHIND. THE SUDDEN AND UNEXPECTED ORDER TO RETREAT HAD THROWN THEM INTO GREAT CONFUSION
AS SUCH THEY BECAME EASY PREY FOR JIANG WEI'S TROOPS

AGHH!

HALT RIGHT THERE! YOUR HEAD IS MINE, SIMA YI!

AFTER SUFFERING MANY PAINFUL DEFEATS AT KONGMING'S HANDS, SIMA YI'S HEART WAS PETRIFIED BY THE THOUGHT THAT HIS GREATEST NIGHTMARE WAS STILL ALIVE

AGHHHH!

I SAID STOP! HAVE YOU FINALLY LEFT YOUR CAMPS ONLY TO FLEE WITHOUT EVEN SWINGING YOUR SWORD ONCE!?

HIS HEAD WAS FAINT AND HE FELT LIKE A DEAD MAN AS HE DESPERATELY FLED FROM THE FIELD.

XIAHOU BA AND XIAHOU WEI!?

COMMANDER! COMMANDER!

THEY HAVE!?

YOU ARE SAFE NOW, SIR. ENEMY TROOPS HAVE BACKED OFF.

CONTINUE THE PURSUIT!?

WILL YOU REGROUP WITH OUR MAIN FORCES AND CONTINUE THE PURSUIT ONCE MORE?

CALL OUR TROOPS BACK!
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS. KONGMING ALWAYS LAYS SEVERAL TRAPS EVEN WHEN HE IS RETREATING. IF HE'S ALIVE, THEN IT'S TOO RISKY TO PURSUE.

THUS, SIMA YI RUSHED BACK TO THE SAFETY OF HIS CAMP AT THE WEI RIVER.

TROOPS WHO WERE SEPARATED DURING THE PANIC ALSO-MANAGED TO FIND THEIR WAY BACK IN DUE TIME

HIS COFFIN!?

COMMANDER, THIS MAN CLAIMS HE SAW KONGMING'S COFFIN.

AT A VALLEY TO THE WEST OF WUZHANG PLAINS, SIR.

ARE YOU SURE? WHERE?

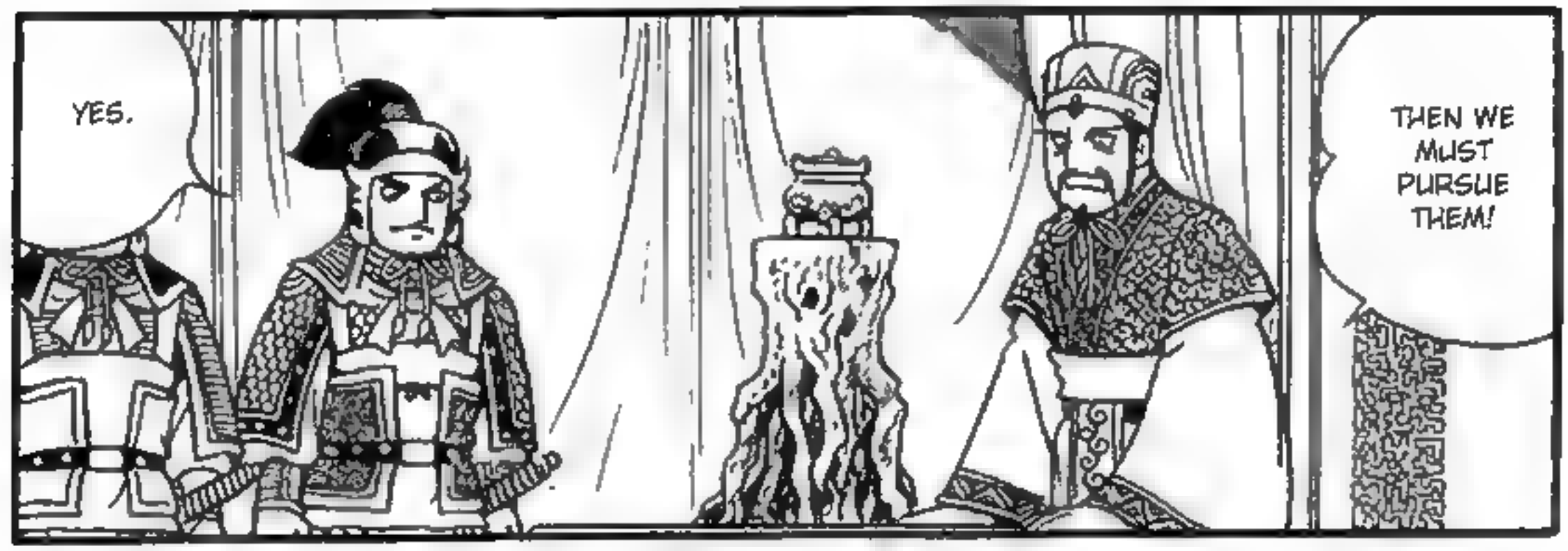
BUT I'M CERTAIN I SAW KONGMING ON HIS CHARIOT...

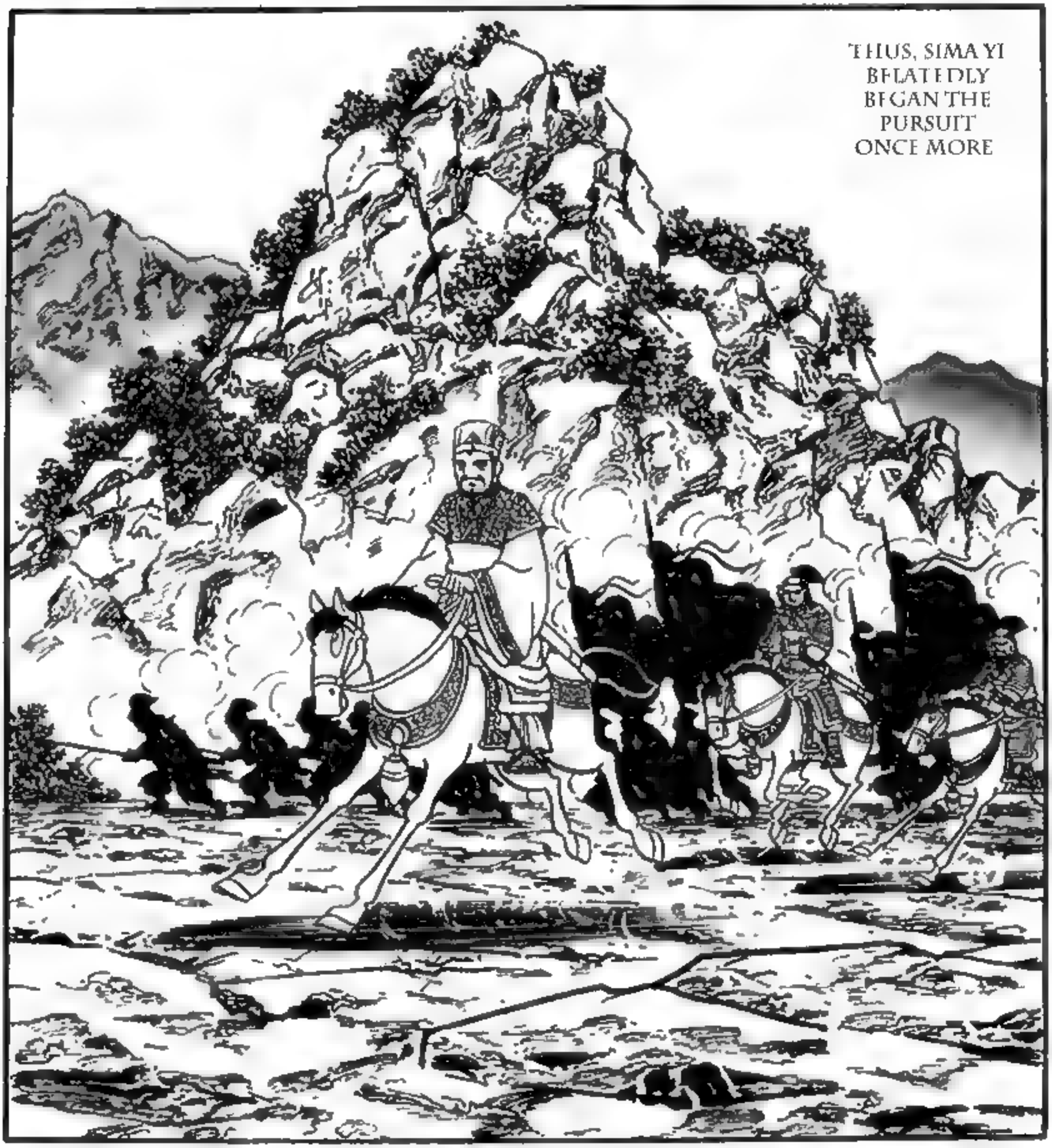
THE COFFIN WAS SURROUNDED BY BLACK FAGS OF MOURNING AND PEOPLE NEARBY WERE ALL CRYING DEEP INTO THE NIGHT.

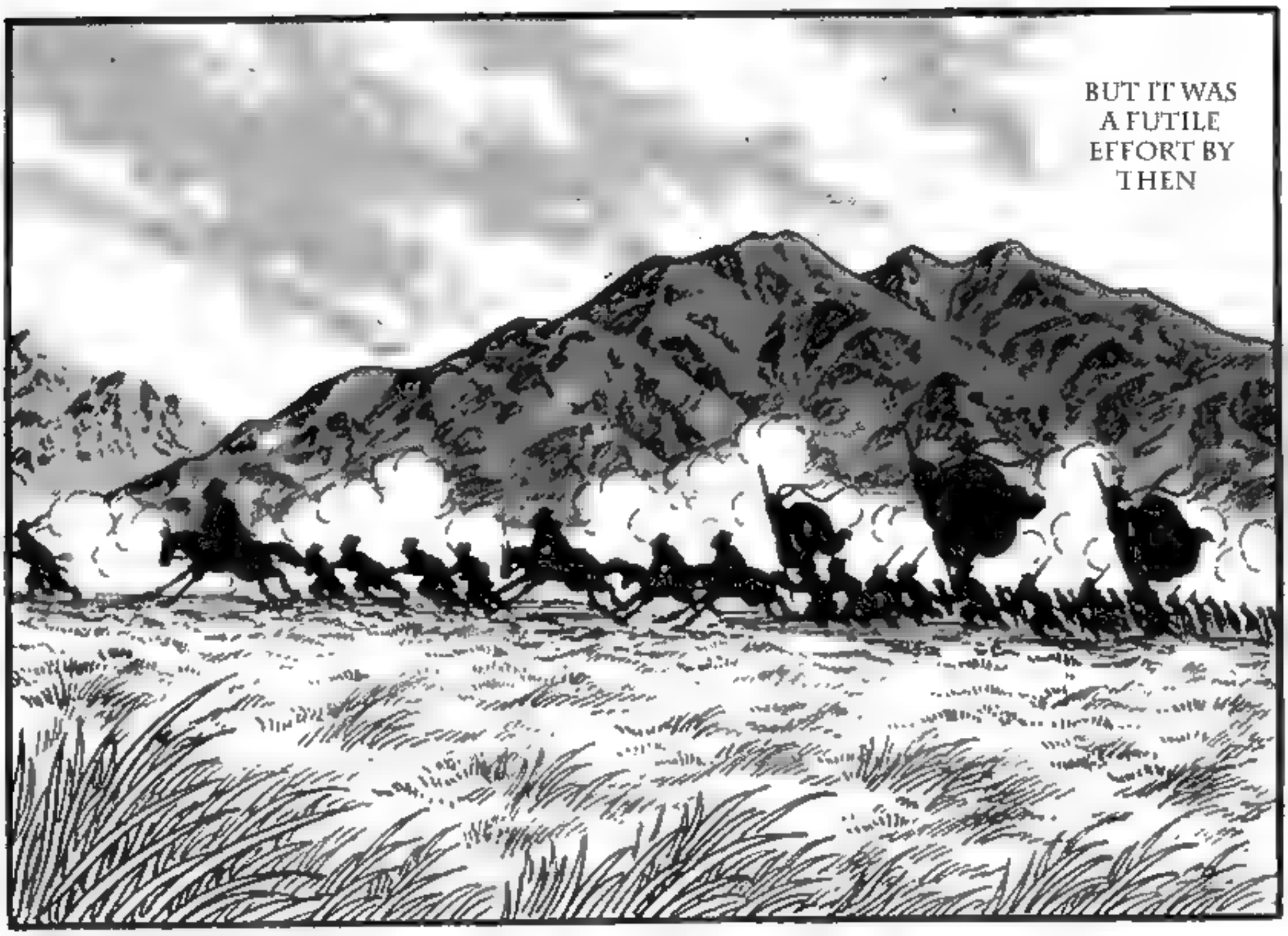
A WOODEN FIGURE!?

ACTUALLY, THAT WAS THE STRANGEST THING. THERE WAS A KONGMING, BUT I DIDN'T SEE HIM MOVE AN INCH. I THINK IT MAY HAVE BEEN JUST A WOODEN FIGURE.

THEN MY READINGS OF THE HEAVENS WERE CORRECT! KONGMING REALLY HAS PASSED AWAY...


YES.
THEN WE MUST PURSUE THEM!


THUS, SIMA YI BELATEDLY BEGAN THE PURSUIT ONCE MORE

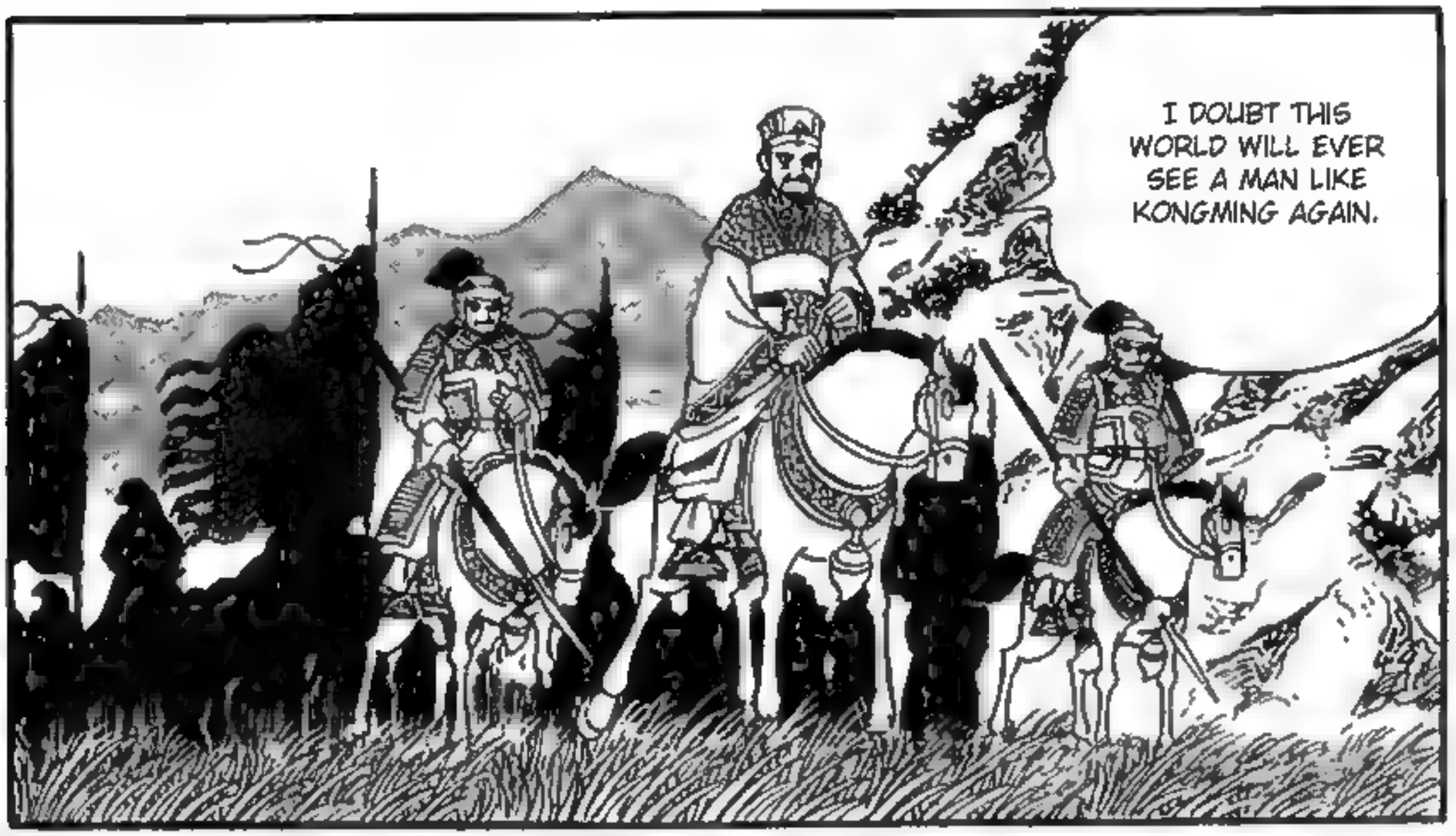

BUT IT WAS A FUTILE EFFORT BY THEN

...THERE'S NO NEED TO CONTINUE OUR PURSUIT ANY FARTHER. WE WILL WITHDRAW.
SHOULD WE STOP HERE FOR THE DAY, COMMANDER?

MORE IMPORTANTLY, LOOK AT THE CAMPS KONGMING LEFT BEHIND!

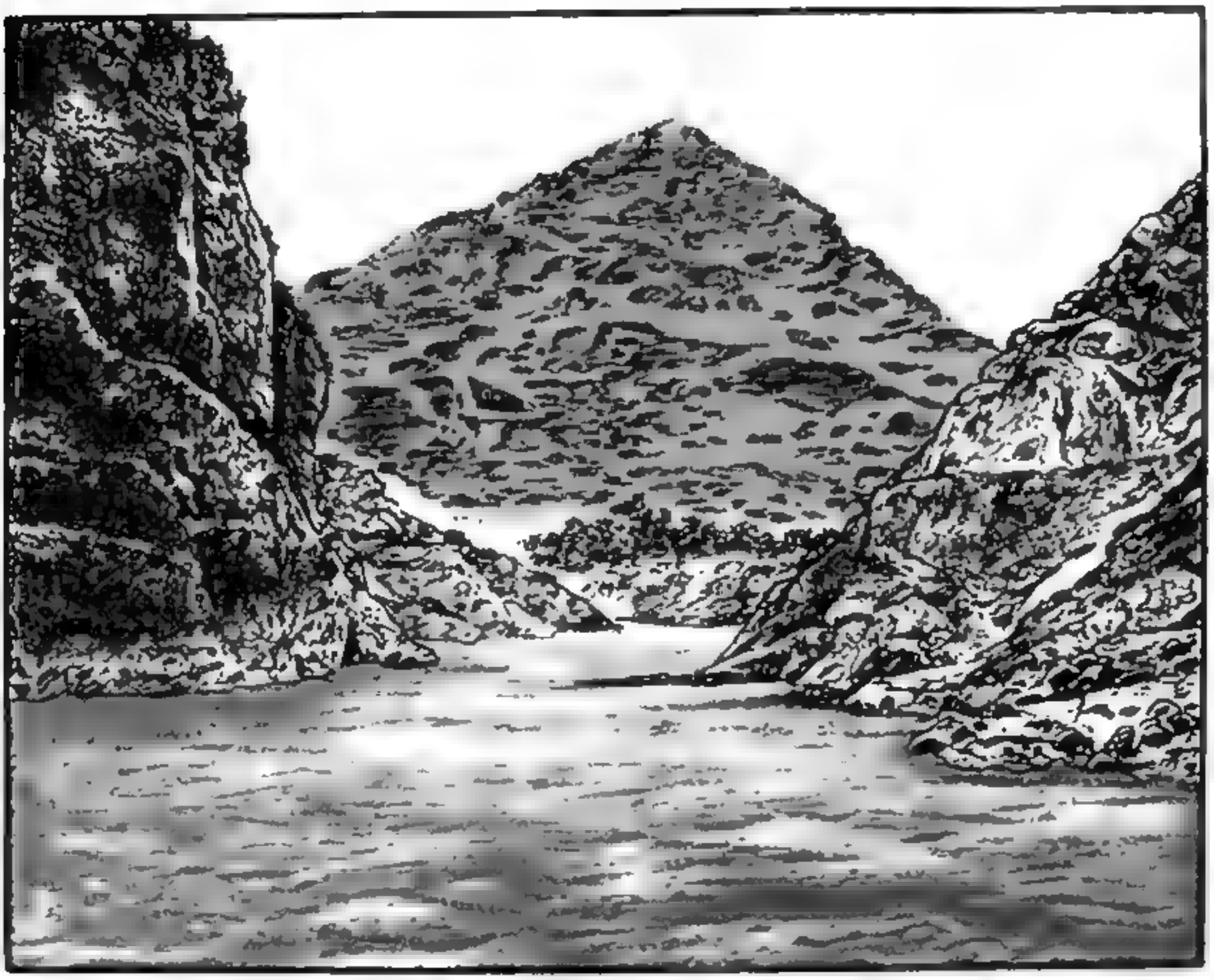
HE TRULY WAS A GENIUS AMONG GENIUSES...

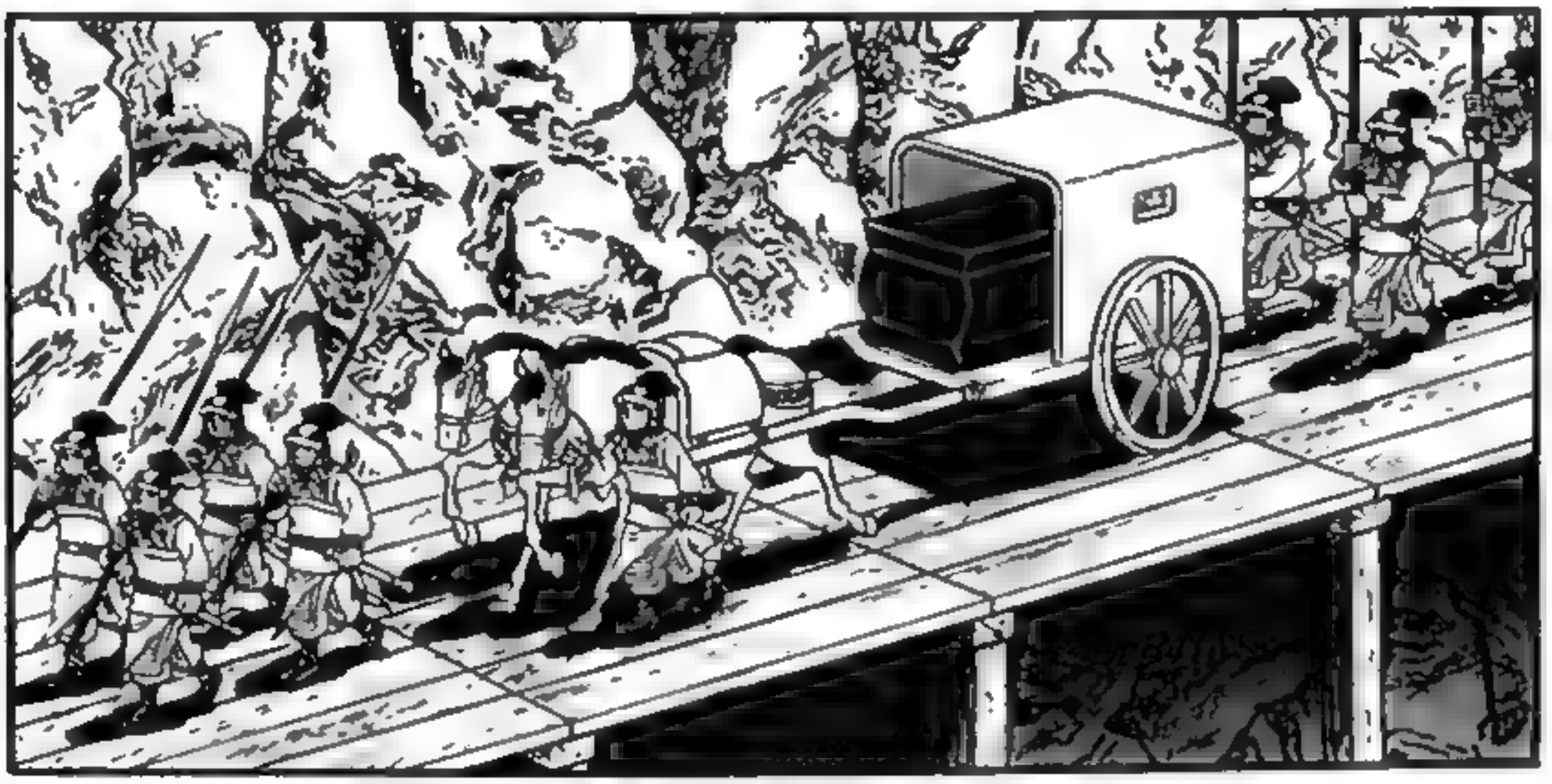
SPLENDID. EVERYTHING ABOUT THESE CAMPS IS IN ACCORDANCE TO THE RULES OF WAR.



WITH THAT, SIMA YI WITHDREW HIS ARMY BACK TO CHANG AN.

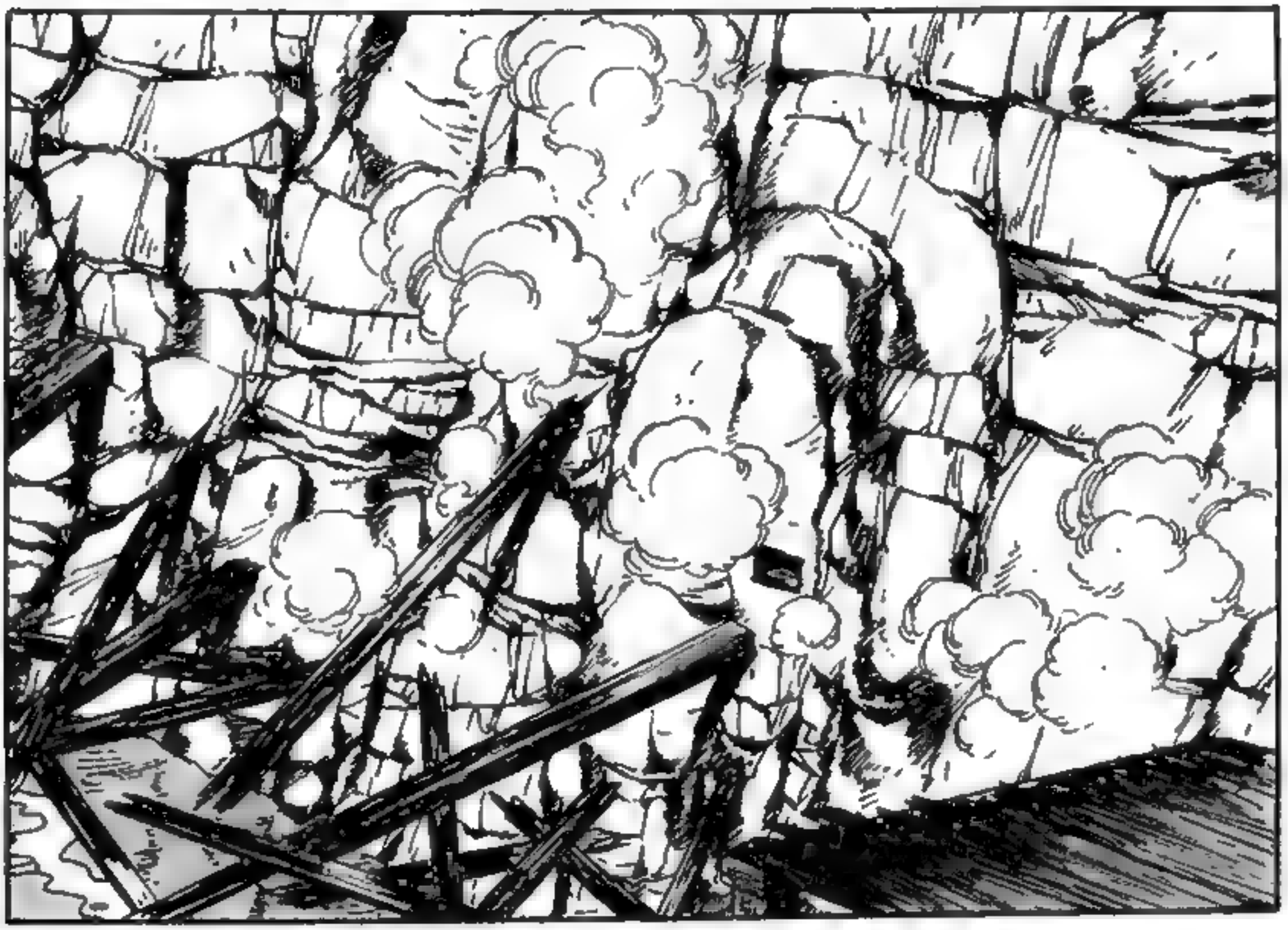
BURNING THE GALLERY ROADS

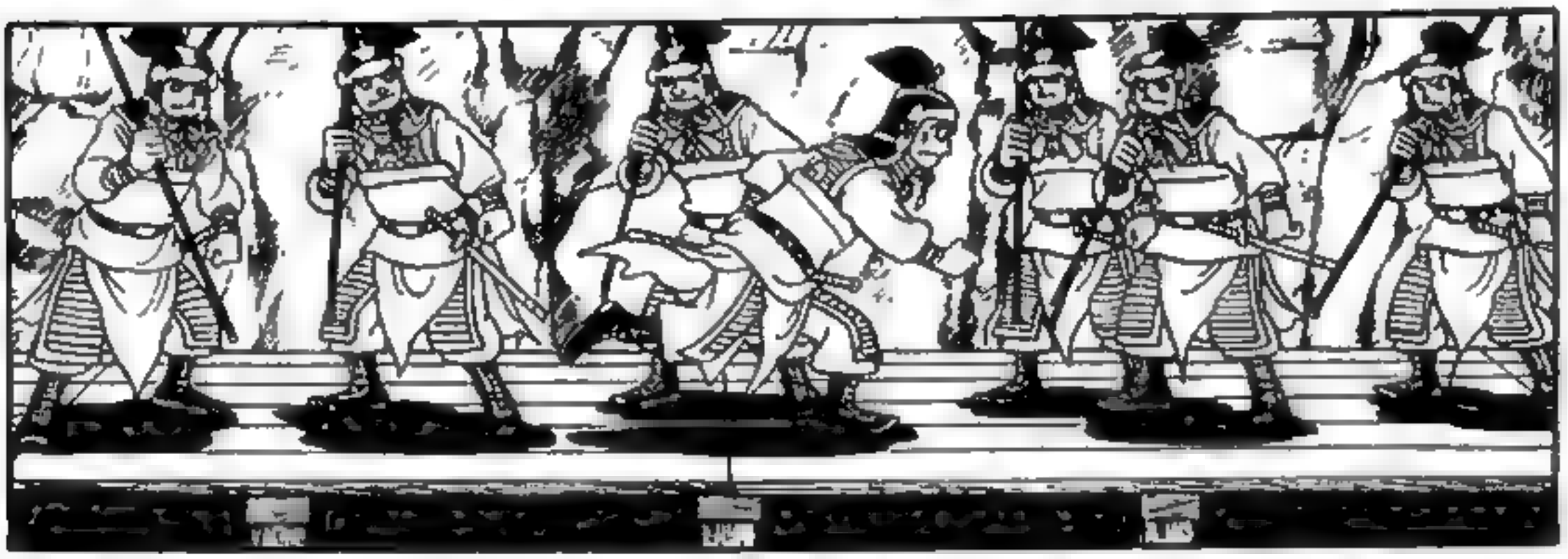




AH!

HM?

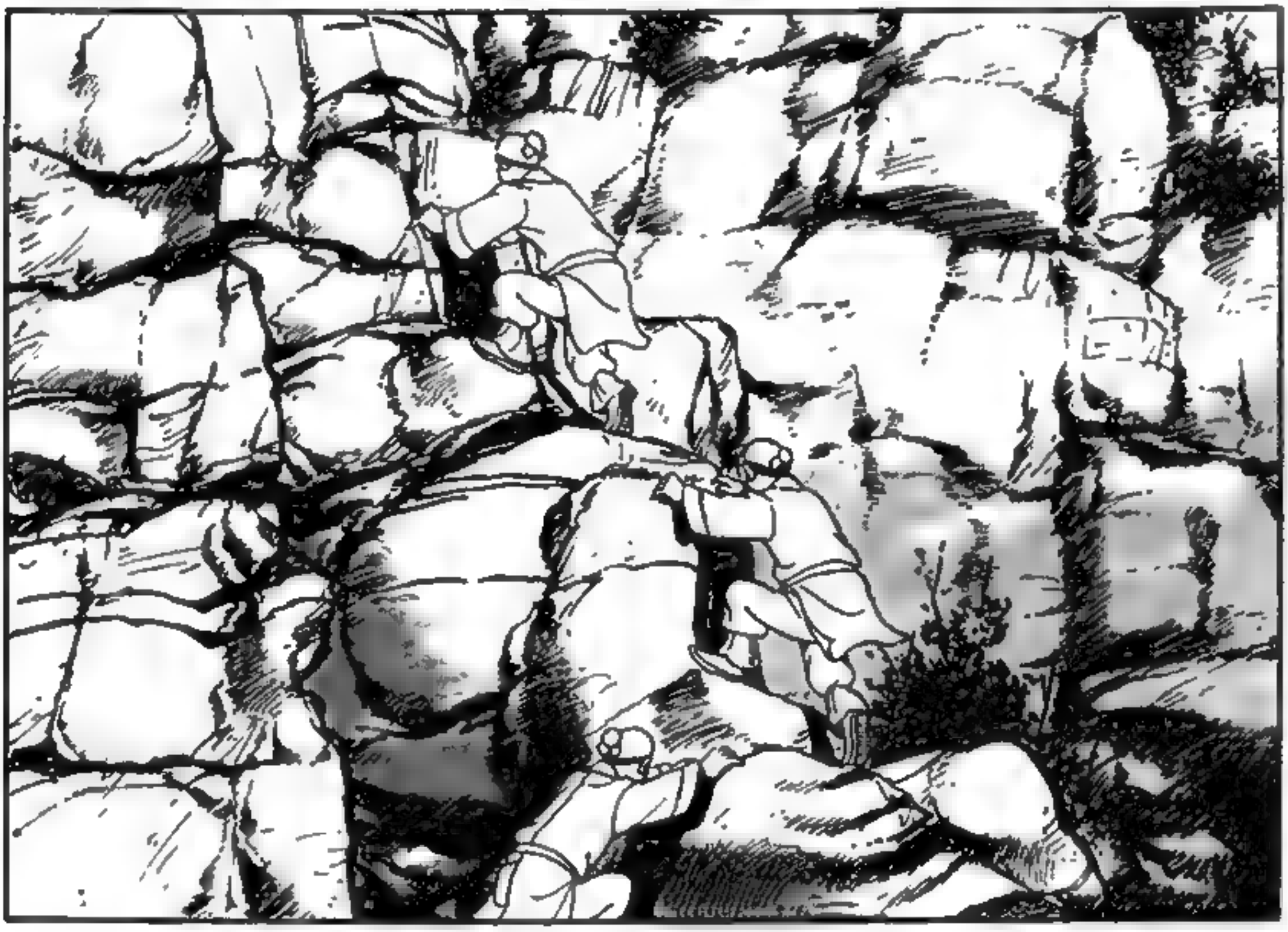




SEND SOME SPIES AHEAD!

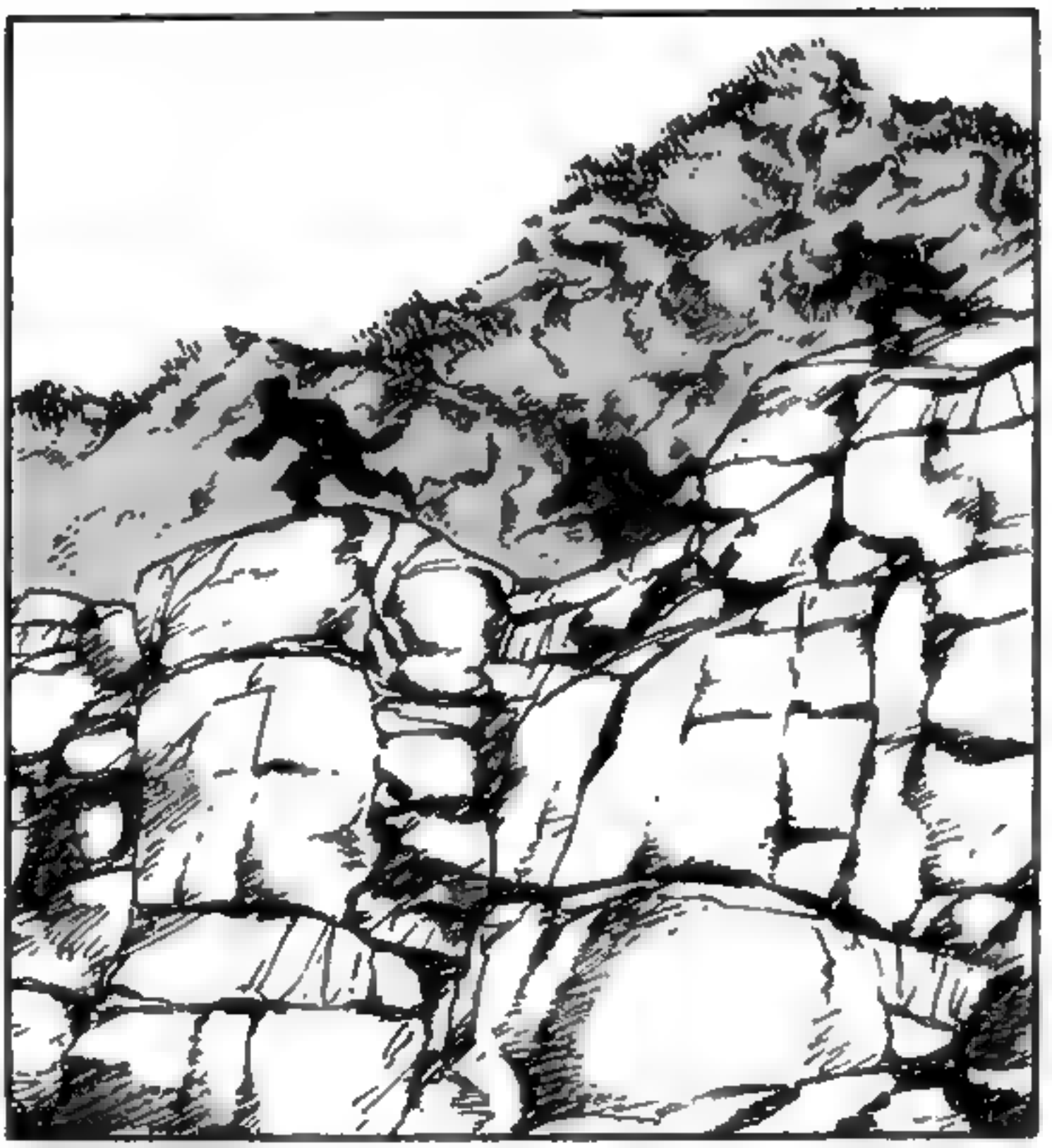
WHAT!?
SIR! THE GALLERY ROADS HAVE BEEN BURNED DOWN BY SOMEBODY!

YES, SIR.



AH!

AHH!



IT'S WEI YAN!

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IT APPEARS WEI YAN'S TROOPS HAVE BURNED DOWN THE GALLERY ROADS.
DID YOU FIND OUT SOMETHING?

SIR!

YES, HIS TROOPS ARE JUST AHEAD OF THE TRAIL.

WEI YAN!?

FEAR NOT, SIR.

IF THE ROADS ARE BURNED DOWN, WE CANNOT RETURN TO CHENGDU WHAT DO WE DO?

SO HE IS STAGING A REVOLT THEN...

THEN LET'S HEAD THAT WAY.

THERE IS?

THERE IS ANOTHER PATH THROUGH CHASHAN, THOUGH IT IS A DIFFICULT TREK.

WHAT IS IT?

...

YANG YI, THERE IS SOMETHING WE SHOULD PRIORITIZE BEFORE...

YES, A MEMORIAL THAT PROBABLY MAKES US OUT TO BE THE ONES STAGING A MILITARY COUP D'ETAT AND WEI YAN TO BE HIS MAJESTY'S PROTECTOR.

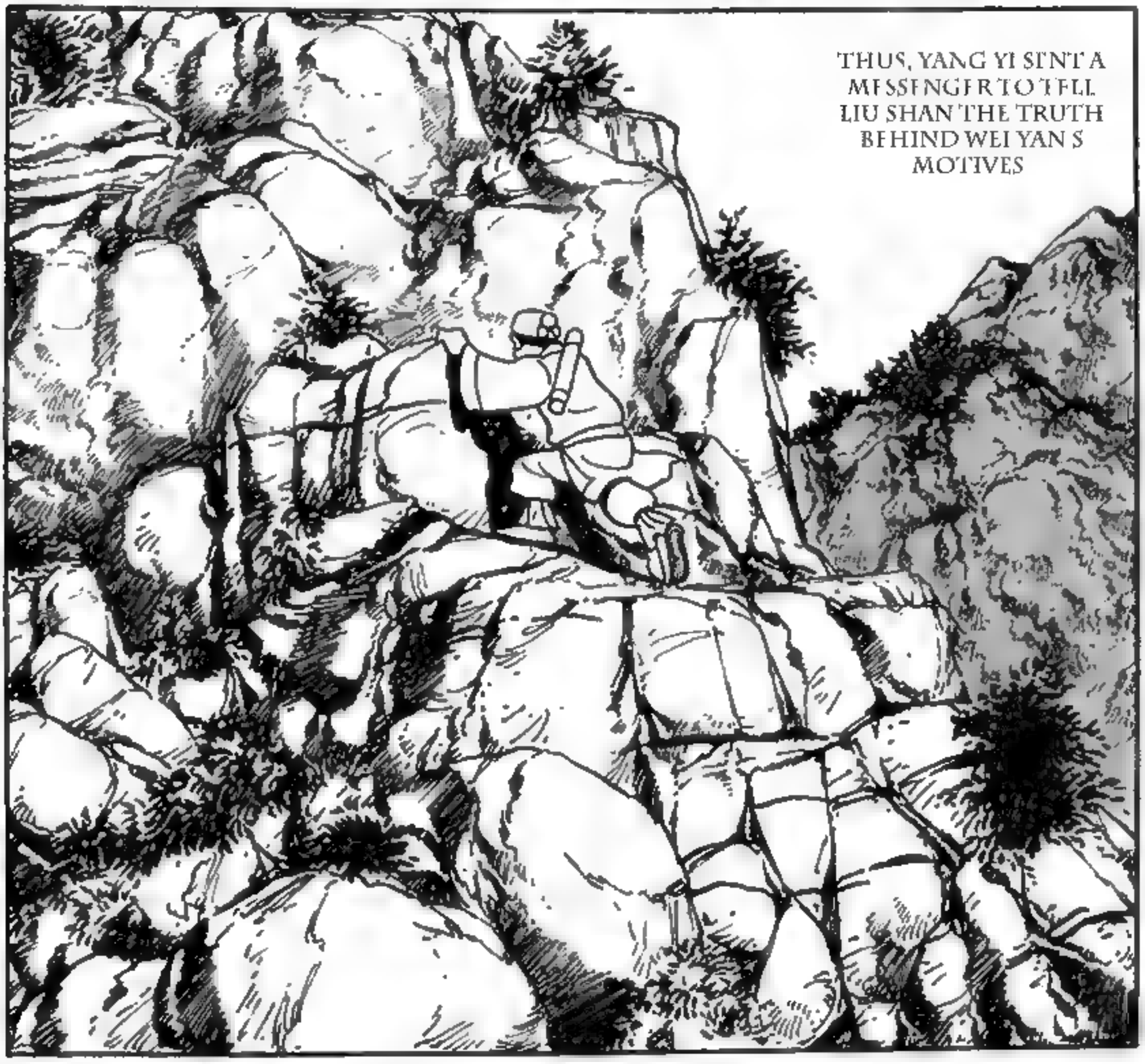
A MEMORIAL TO ATTACK US!?

IF WEI YAN HAS BEAT US HERE AND BURNED DOWN THE GALLERY ROADS, THEN I FEAR HE HAS ALSO SENT A MEMORIAL TO HIS MAJESTY ABOUT HIS INTENTIONS TO ATTACK US.

AH YES, GOOD POINT.

IF WE DO NOT ALSO SEND A MEMORIAL TELLING HIS MAJESTY OUR SIDE OF THE STORY, HE MAY BE TAKEN IN BY WEI YAN'S LIES.

GIVE ME A MOMENT THEN.


THUS, YANG YI SENT A MESSENGER TO TELL LIU SHAN THE TRUTH BEHIND WEI YAN'S MOTIVES

CHENGDU

GENERAL WEI YAN SENDS A MEMORIAL, YOUR MAJESTY.

HM!?

YANG YI HAS STOLEN KONGMING'S COFFIN AND STARTED A REVOLT!

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

WITH KONGMING GONE AND OUR BORDERS VULNERABLE TO WEI AND WU, IT SEEMS WE HAVE A REVOLT ON TOP OF ALL THAT TO DEAL WITH.

WHAT!?

YANG YI!?

YES, READ IT OUT LOUD FOR ALL, LI FU.

MAY I PLEASE READ THE MEMORIAL MYSELF, YOUR MAJESTY?

"AFTER THE CHANCELLOR'S PASSING, HIS SECRETARY YANG YI HAS USURPED COMMAND OF THE ARMY AND STOLEN THE CHANCELLOR'S COFFIN. HE AIMS TO LEAD ENEMIES WITHIN OUR BORDERS AND TAKE SHU FOR HIMSELF. I HAVE STALLED THEM SO FAR BY BURNING DOWN THE GALLERY ROADS AND I NOW SEEK PERMISSION TO SMITE THE REBEL FORCE."

THIS ALL SEEMS VERY STRANGE...

LOOK! HE SAYS YANG YI TRIED TO LEAD WEI TROOPS IN OUR BORDERS!

MOREOVER, A GENERAL OF WEI YAN'S CALIBRE SHOULD EASILY BE ABLE TO BEAT AN ARMY LED BY YANG YI, SO I'M CONFUSED AS TO WHY HE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO BURN DOWN THE GALLERY ROADS INSTEAD.

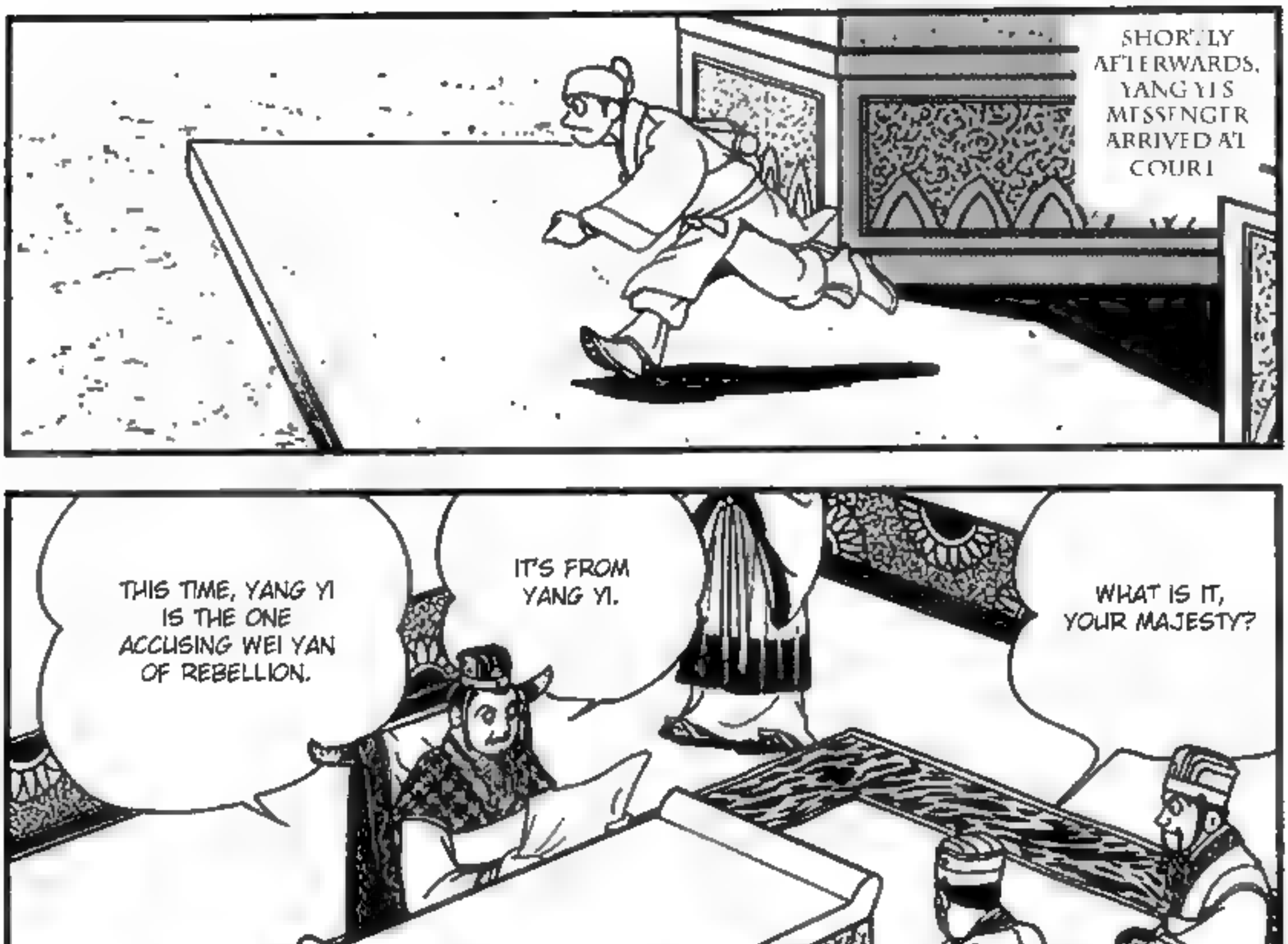
AH, I THINK YOU DID REPORT THAT TO ME...

WHEN I SPOKE WITH THE CHANCELLOR JUST BEFORE HIS PASSING, HE TOLD ME HE WOULD LEAVE YANG YI IN CHARGE OF THE ARMY.

I AGREE WITH FINDING THIS MEMORIAL SUSPICIOUS. EVEN IF YANG YI IS A CIVIL OFFICER, KONGMING TRUSTED HIM ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM HIS CHIEF SECRETARY. I DO NOT THINK YANG YI IMPROPERLY SEIZED COMMAND OF THE TROOPS.

LASTLY, THE CHANCELLOR LONG BELIEVED WEI YAN HARBOURED REBELLIOUS INTENTIONS BUT KEPT HIM AROUND AS HE VALUED WEI YAN'S TALENTS TOO MUCH.

HMM... YES, YOU'RE RIGHT. THE LAST THING I WANT IS TO DRIVE EITHER SIDE TO WEI'S HANDS.
IN ANY CASE, TRUSTING WEI YAN ON HIS WORDS ALONE WILL ONLY DRIVE YANG YI AND HIS TROOPS TO SEEK REFUGE IN WEI. WE MUST INVESTIGATE THIS MATTER MORE CLOSELY BEFORE BELIEVING EITHER SIDE.


SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, YANG YI'S MESSENGER ARRIVED AT COURT
THIS TIME, YANG YI IS THE ONE ACCUSING WEI YAN OF REBELLION.
IT'S FROM YANG YI.
WHAT IS IT, YOUR MAJESTY?

"BEFORE THE CHANCELLOR'S UNFORTUNATE PASSING, HE ENTRUSTED ME WITH LEADING OUR ARMY SAFELY BACK TO SHU."

"AS PER HIS INSTRUCTIONS, I ORDERED WEI YAN TO LEAD THE REARGUARD AND JIANGWEI TO LEAD THE MIDDLE GUARD, BUT WEI YAN REFUSED TO FOLLOW THE CHANCELLOR'S FINAL ORDERS. INSTEAD, HE RUSHED AHEAD OF THE VANGUARD INTO HANZHONG AND BURNED DOWN THE GALLERY ROADS TO IMPEDE OUR TROOPS. HIS ACTIONS CLEARLY PROVE THAT HE IS REBELLING AGAINST AUTHORITY."

YANG YI CAN BE HASTY AND NARROW-MINDED, BUT HE LOYALLY SERVED THE CHANCELLOR FOR MANY YEARS. IF THE CHANCELLOR EVER THOUGHT YANG YI HARBOURED EVEN THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF REBELLION, HE WOULD NOT HAVE TRUSTED YANG YI WITH COMMAND OF THE TROOPS AFTER HIS PASSING.

WHAT DO YOU GENTLEMEN MAKE OF THE TWO SIDES?

I CANNOT DETECT ANY UNDERHANDED MOTIVES IN YANG YI'S MEMORIAL, BUT I CAN IMAGINE MANY SINISTER MOTIVES IN WEI YAN'S MEMORIAL.

IN CONTRAST, WEI YAN IS A VAINGLORIOUS GENERAL WHO EVEN LOOKED DOWN ON THE CHANCELLOR.

HMM...

I FEEL THE SAME, YOUR MAJESTY. YANG YI, FOR ALL HIS FLAWS, IS NOT BOLD ENOUGH TO EVER TURN HIS SWORD AGAINST YOUR MAJESTY. MEANWHILE, WEI YAN, IN SPITE OF ALL HIS SERVICES IN THE PAST, HAS LONG RESENTED THE CHANCELLOR'S COMMAND OF THE ARMY. IT WAS ONLY THE CHANCELLOR'S PRESENCE THAT KEPT HIS AMBITIONS IN CHECK, BUT WITH THAT LAST OBSTACLE REMOVED, IT SEEMS ONLY NATURAL THAT HE WOULD MAKE HIS BID FOR SUPREME MILITARY POWER.

ANY OTHER OPINIONS?

.....

.....

WORRY NOT, YOUR MAJESTY. IF THE CHANCELLOR REALLY LEFT YANG YI IN CHARGE, THEN I'M SURE HE ALSO LEFT YANG YI A PLAN TO DEAL WITH WEI YAN.

NO OTHER OPINIONS?

I WANT TO SETTLE THIS AFFAIR BY CALMING BOTH SIDES DOWN IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.

PERHAPS, BUT WE CANNOT RISK WEI YAN DEFECTING TO WEI.

THUS, DONG YUN WAS SENT TO MEDIATE BOTH SIDES

WEI YAN'S UPRISING

THUS, HE
ORDERED THE
TROOPS TO
MARCH DAY
AND NIGHT

RIGHT.

GENERAL WANG PING! THE COMMANDER CALLS FOR YOU.

I NEED YOU TO HEAD TO THE NAN VALLEY AND ENGAGE WEI YAN'S TROOPS.

YOU CALLED FOR ME, SIR?

KEEP IN MIND THAT WEI YAN'S TROOPS ARE SHU MEN WHO STILL HAVE FAMILIES BACK HOME. TRY YOUR BEST TO CONVINCE THEM TO DEFECT INSTEAD OF KILLING THEM.

UNDERSTOOD.

MEANWHILE, WE WILL TRY TO BEAT WEI YAN TO HANZHONG AND TAKE CONTROL OF ITS DEFENSES.

YES, I WILL TRY MY BEST TO DENT THEIR SPIRITS TO FIGHT FOR WEI YAN'S AMBITIONS.

ALRIGHT, MEN! LET US GO DEAL WITH THE REBELS!

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WHAT!?

WANG PING'S TROOPS ARE COMING UP FROM OUR REAR!

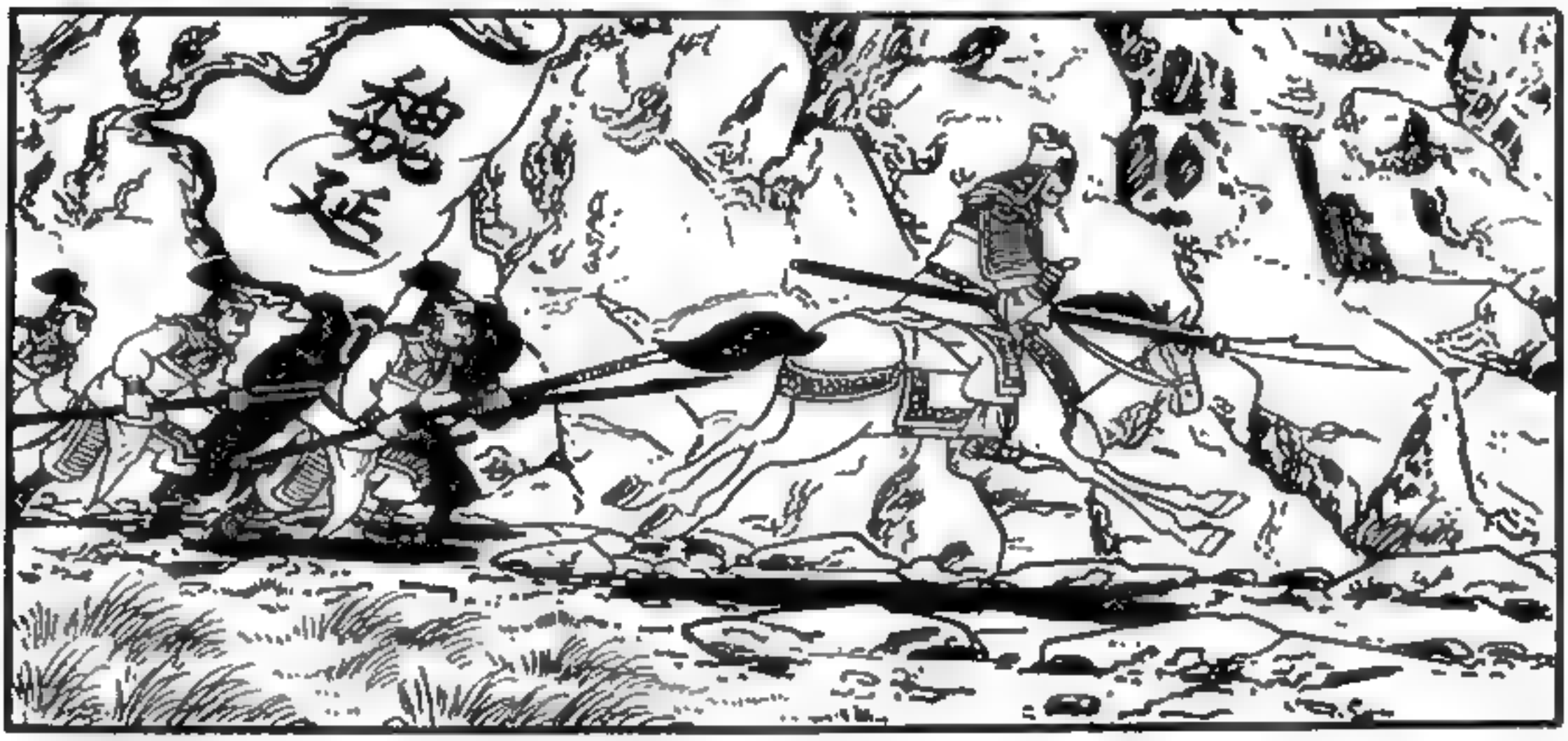
SIR!

IT SEEMS THEY'VE FOUND ANOTHER PATH TO GET PAST OUR POSITION.

BUT HOW!?

LET'S TAKE THE FIGHT TO HIM!

HMPH, IT'S STILL ONLY WANG PING! WHAT CAN HE DO!?



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SILENCE, REBEL! HOW DARE YOU REVOLT BEFORE EVEN THE CHANCELLOR'S BODY IS BROUGHT BACK TO THE CAPITAL FOR A FUNERAL!

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WANG PING! I ASSUME YOU'RE NOT HERE TO JOIN MY SIDE, ARE YOU?

THINK BACK TO ALL THE CHANCELLOR HAS DONE FOR YOU AND DECIDE! TO FIGHT FOR WEI YAN'S PERSONAL AMBITIONS OR TO COLLECT YOUR REWARDS AND GO HOME TO YOUR FAMILIES!

TROOPS OF WEI YAN, HEAR ME WELL! DO YOU NOT HAVE FATHERS, MOTHERS, WIVES, AND CHILDREN WAITING BACK HOME? ARE YOU NOT AWARE THAT RELATIVES OF REBELS WILL BE PERSECUTED AS REBELS AS WELL!?

CEASE YOUR LIES!

OPEN YOUR EYES! HOW COULD A MERE CIVIL OFFICER LIKE YANG YI BE THE MAN THAT THE CHANCELLOR LEFT IN CHARGE? HE'S CLEARLY MAKING HIS OWN BID FOR POWER AND YOU'RE ALL UNKNOWING ACCOMPLICES!

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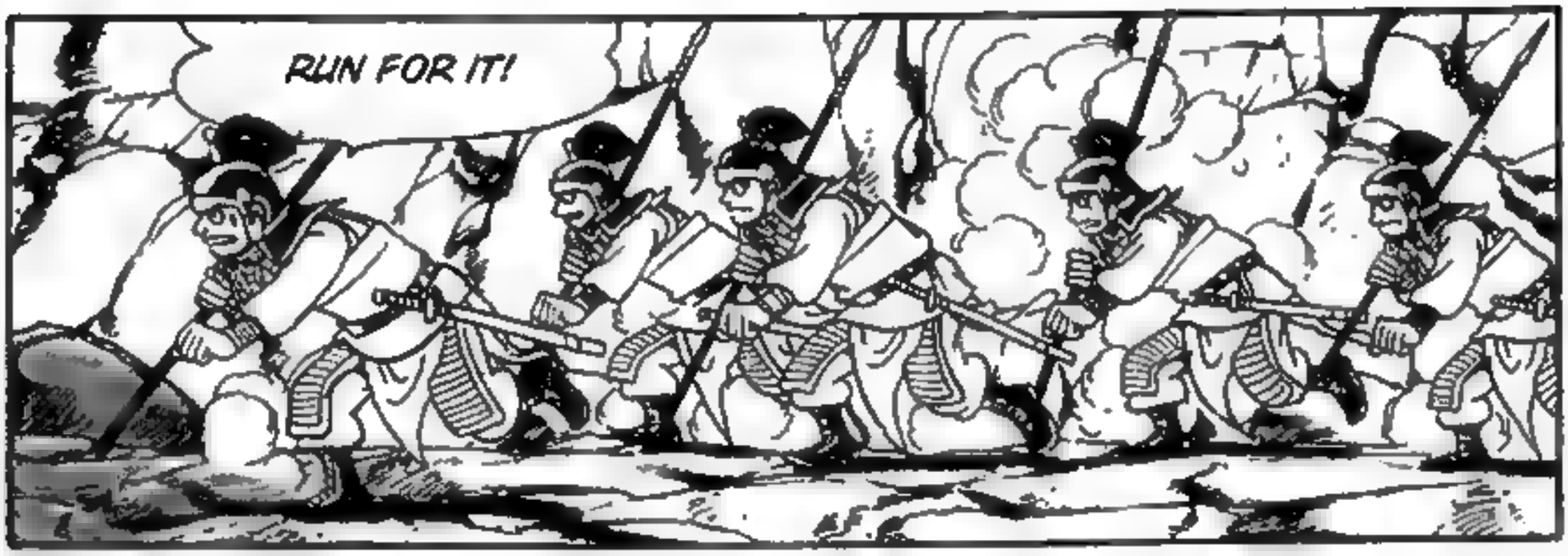
I THOUGHT WE WERE FIGHTING THE REBEL YANG YI...

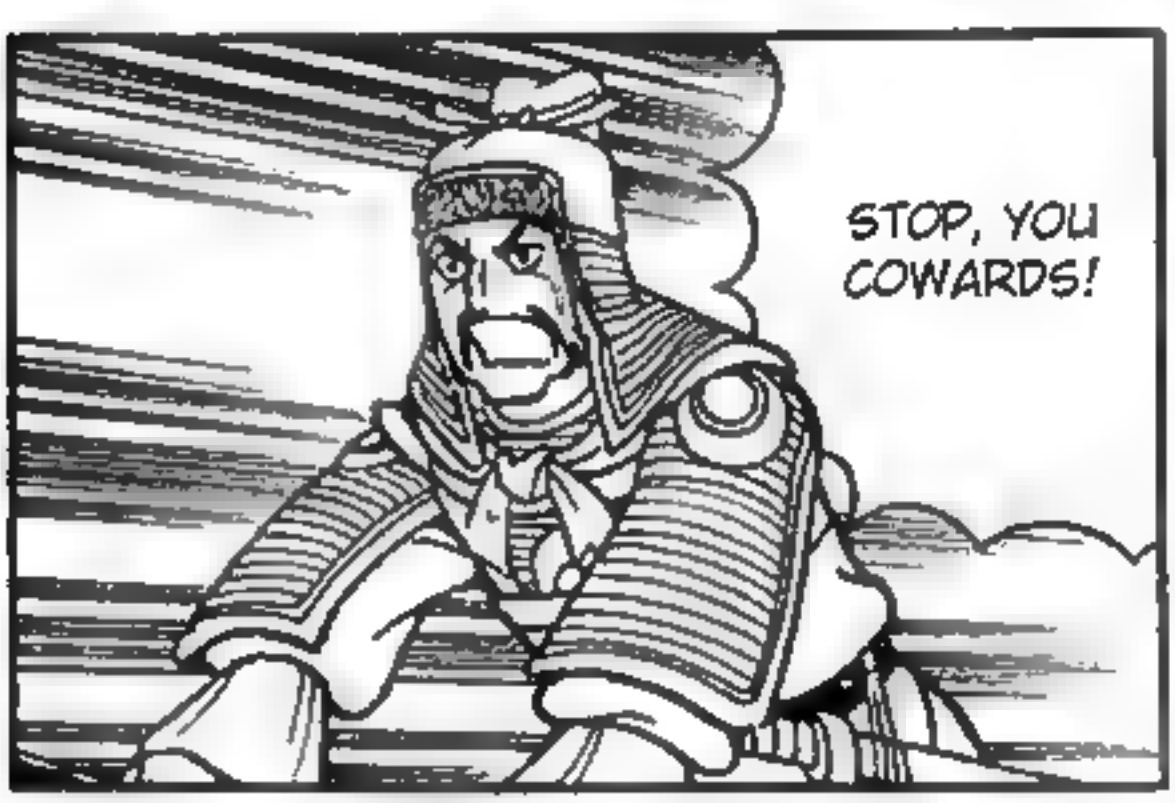
IF THAT'S TRUE, MY WIFE AND KIDS MIGHT BE CONVICTED!

WAIT, SO WEI YAN'S THE ONE STAGING A REBELLION HERE?

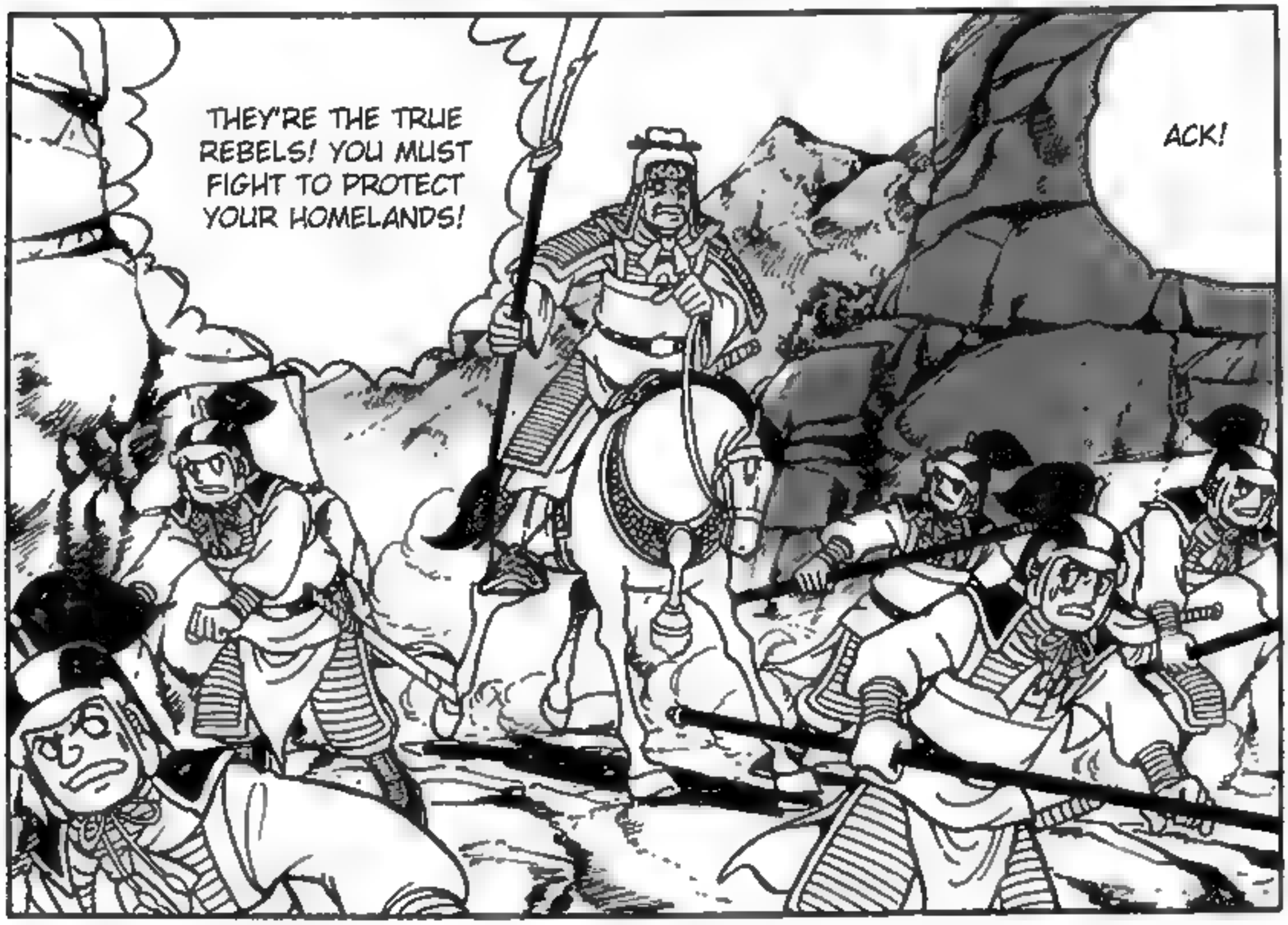
RIGHT. WHO WANTS TO FIGHT OUR OWN BRETHREN?

MAYBE IT IS BETTER TO JUST COLLECT OUR PAYMENTS AND GO BACK HOME.


RUN FOR IT!


STOP, YOU COWARDS!

HM!?

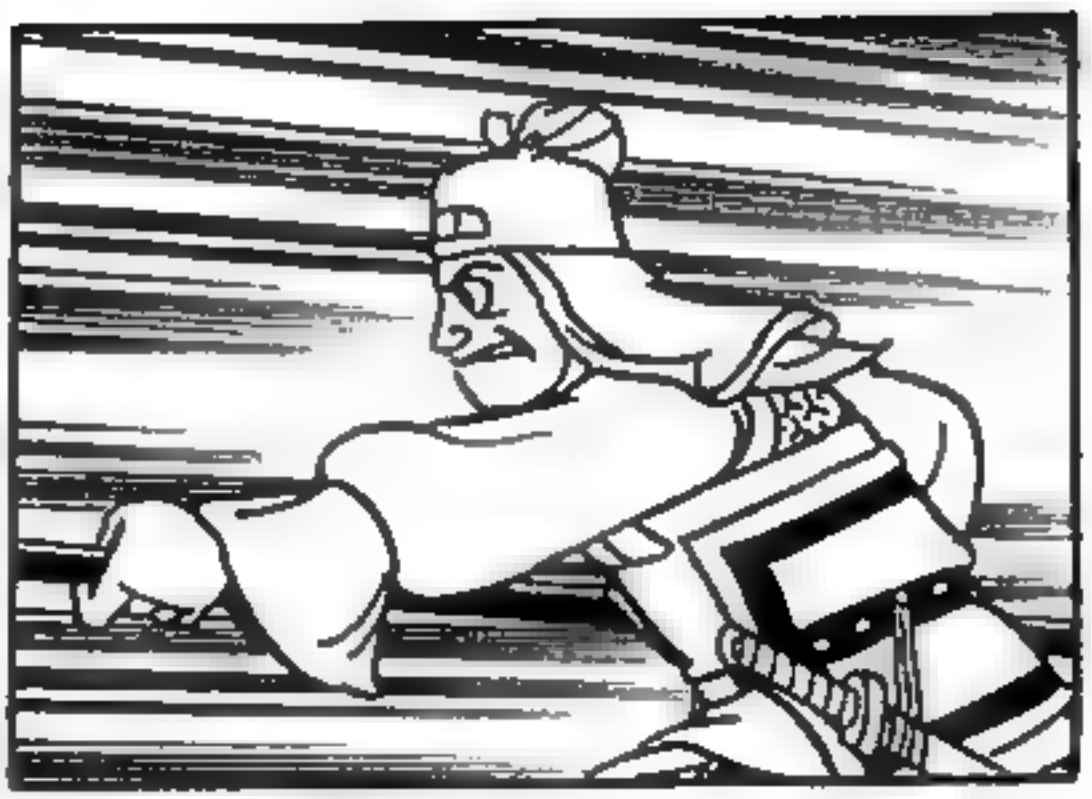

THEY'RE THE TRUE REBELS! YOU MUST FIGHT TO PROTECT YOUR HOMELANDS!
ACK!

W-WE'LL FIGHT! WE'LL FIGHT!

Y-YES, SIR.

THEN WE'LL START WITH THEM!

IF YOU STILL WISH TO AID THE REBEL WEI YAN AT THE COST OF YOUR FAMILIES, THEN SO BE IT!

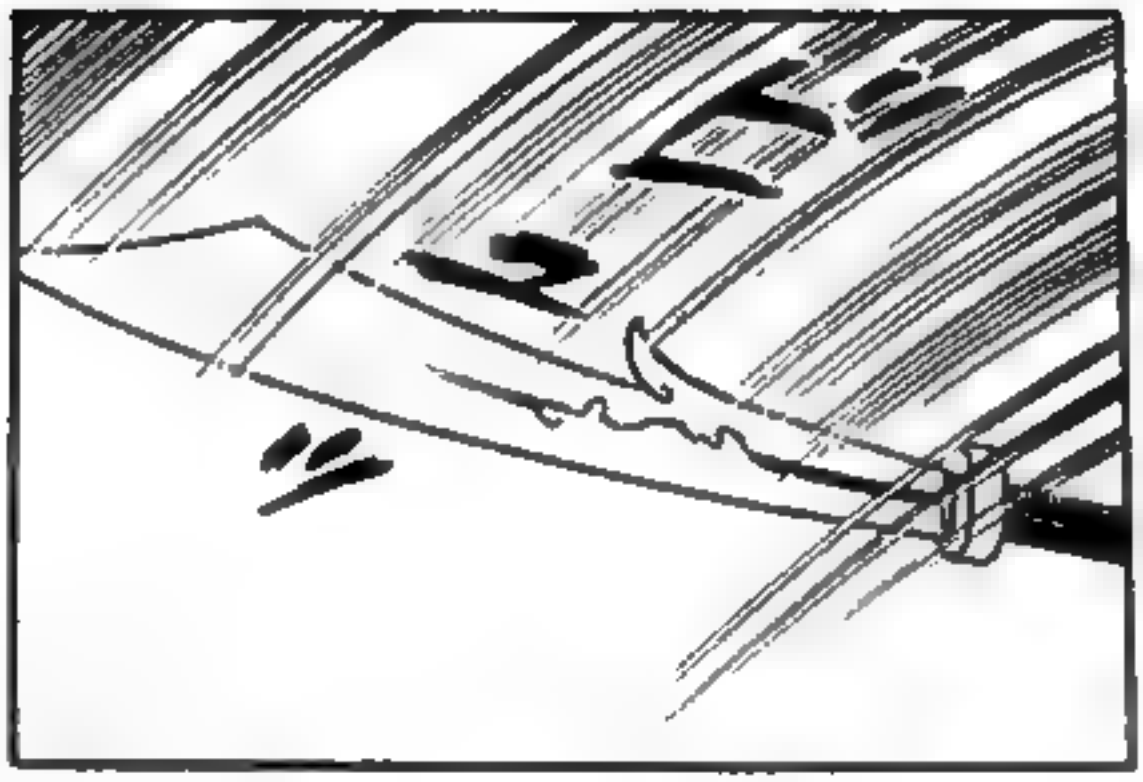


WEI YAN'S
TROOPS
WERE ALREADY
DEMORALIZED

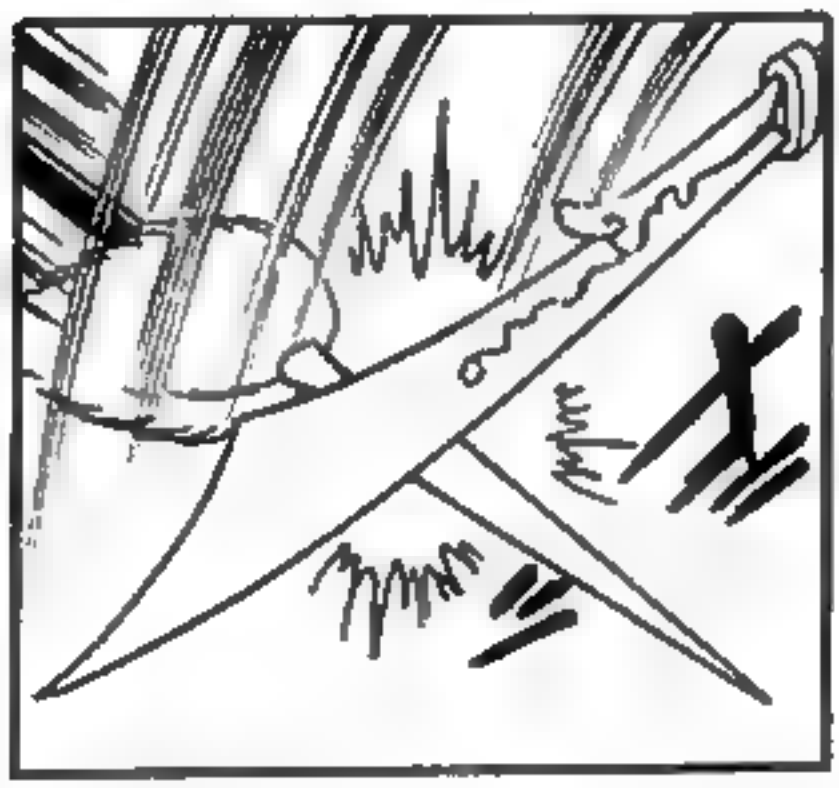
FIGHT
ME,
WANG
PING!

NGHH!

JUST WHAT I WANTED!
FAR SAFER THAN YOU, WHO'LL EAGERLY USURP THE THRONE AT THE FIRST CHANCE!
WANG PING! DO YOU REALLY THINK THE LIKES OF YANG YI CAN KEEP SHU SAFE!?



HMPH!
THEN I
WON'T
HOLD BACK
ANYMORE!



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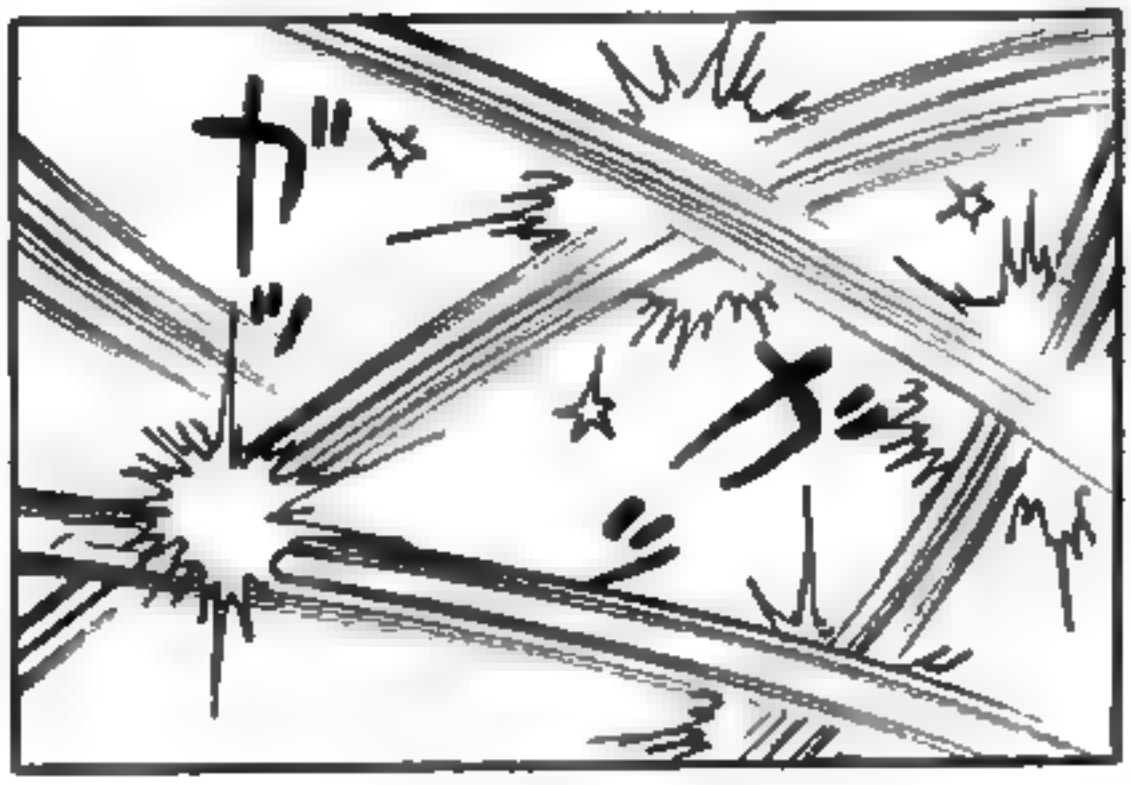
RETREAT!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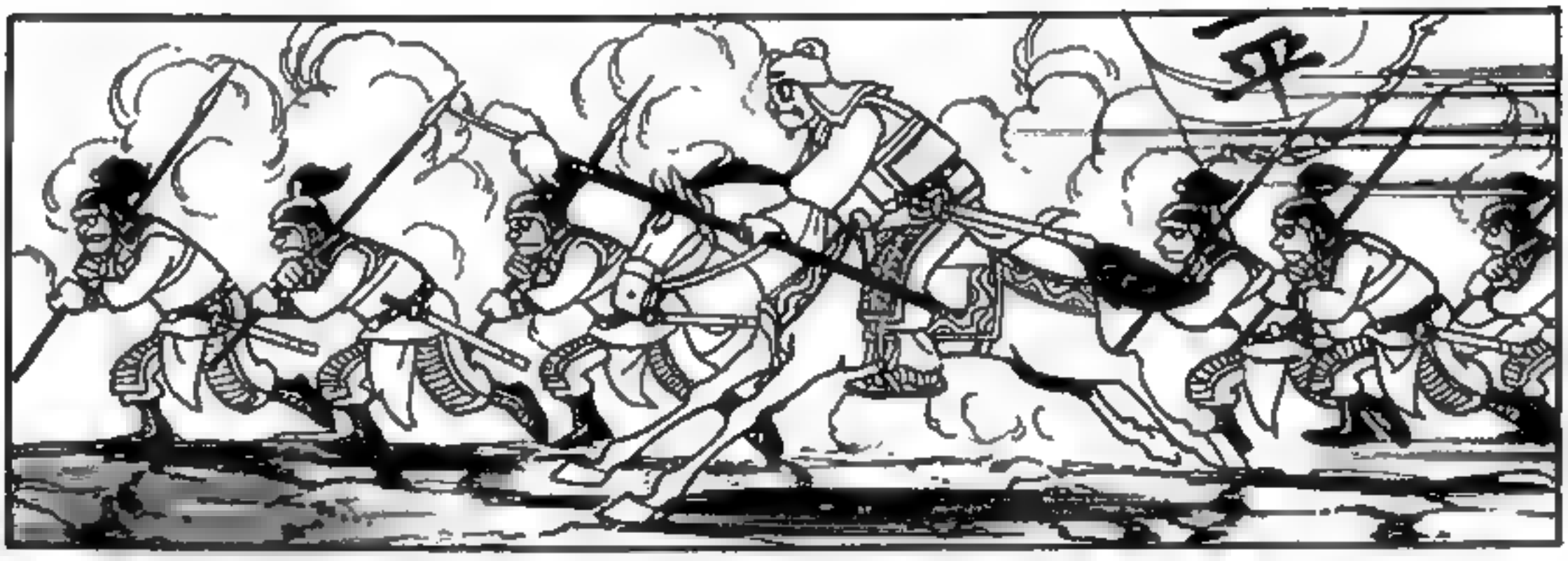
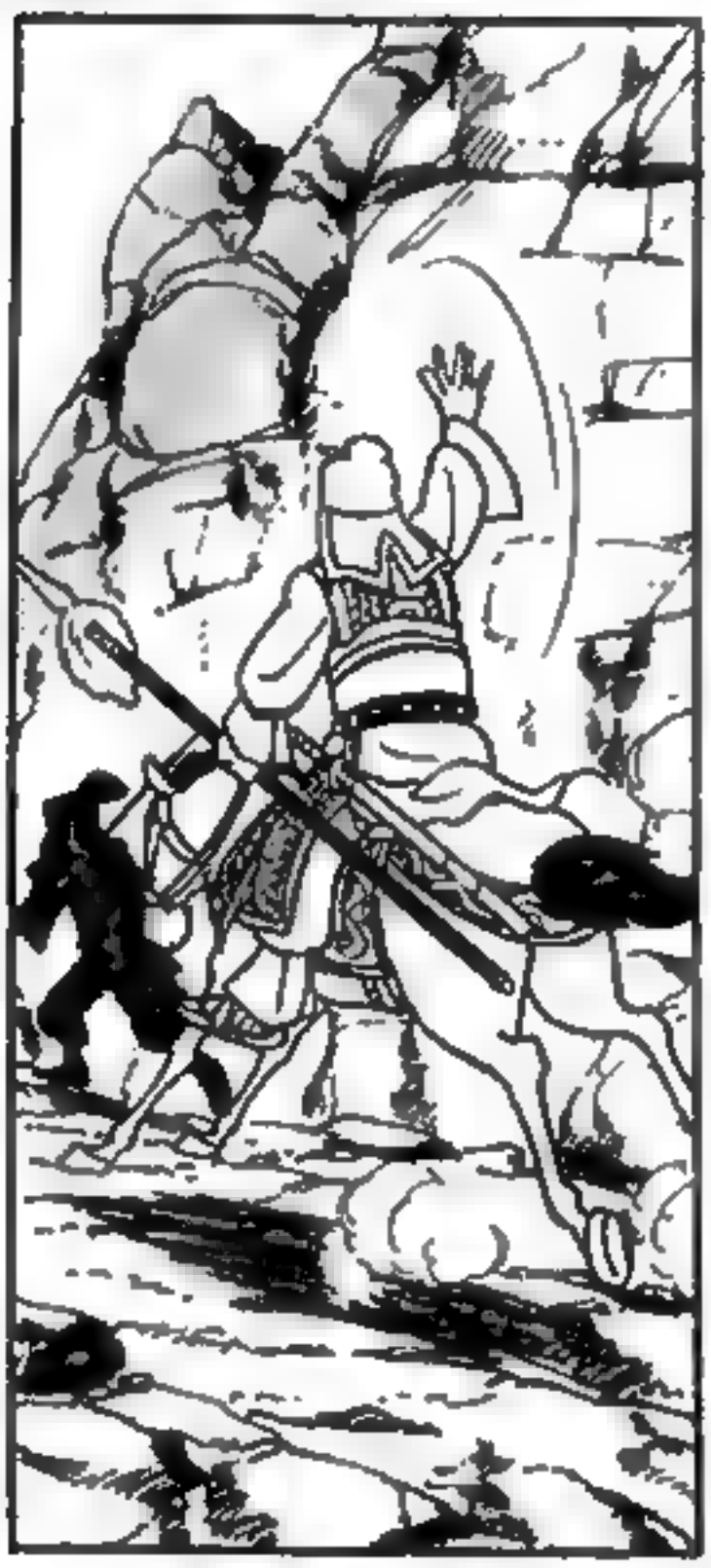
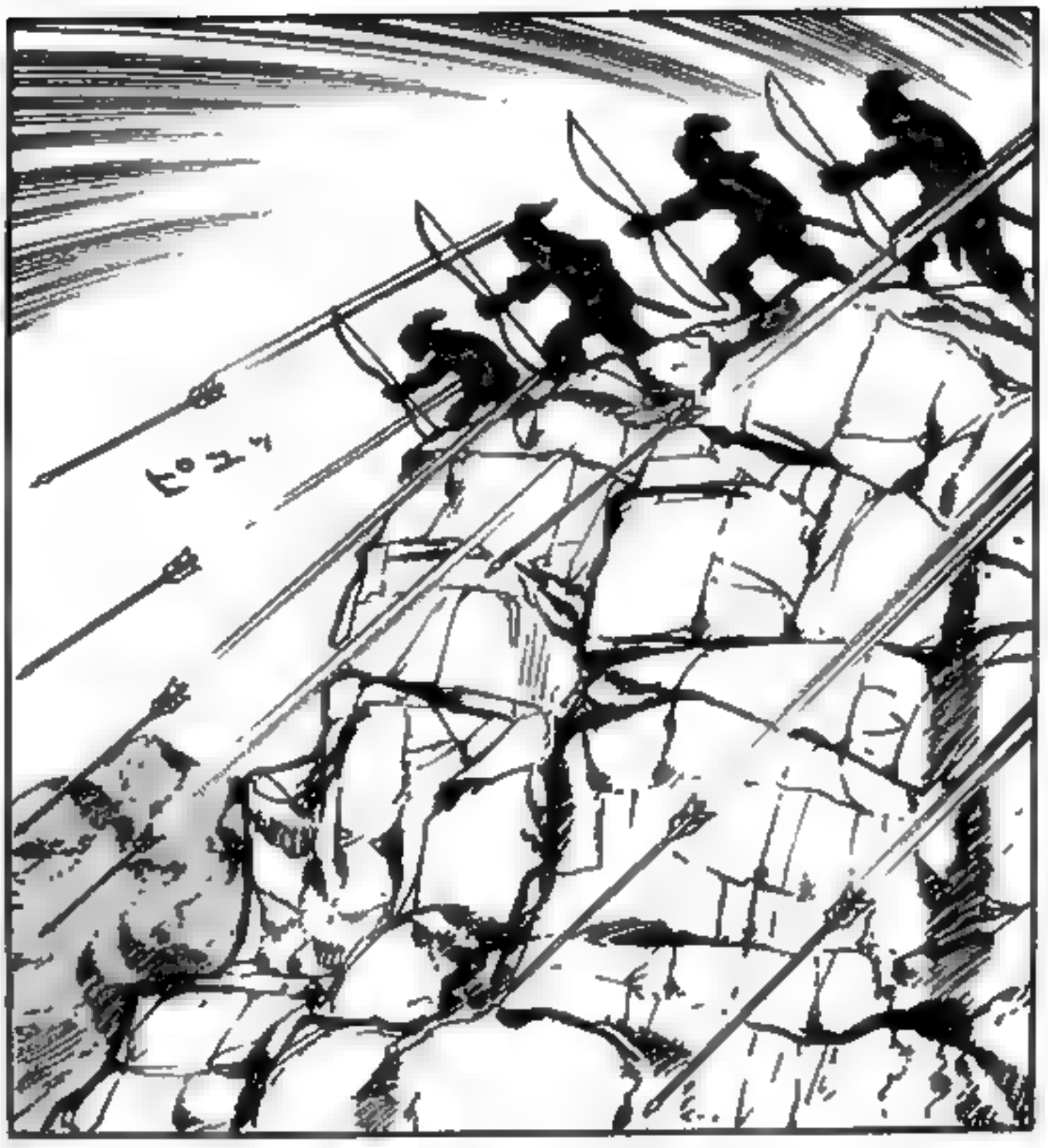


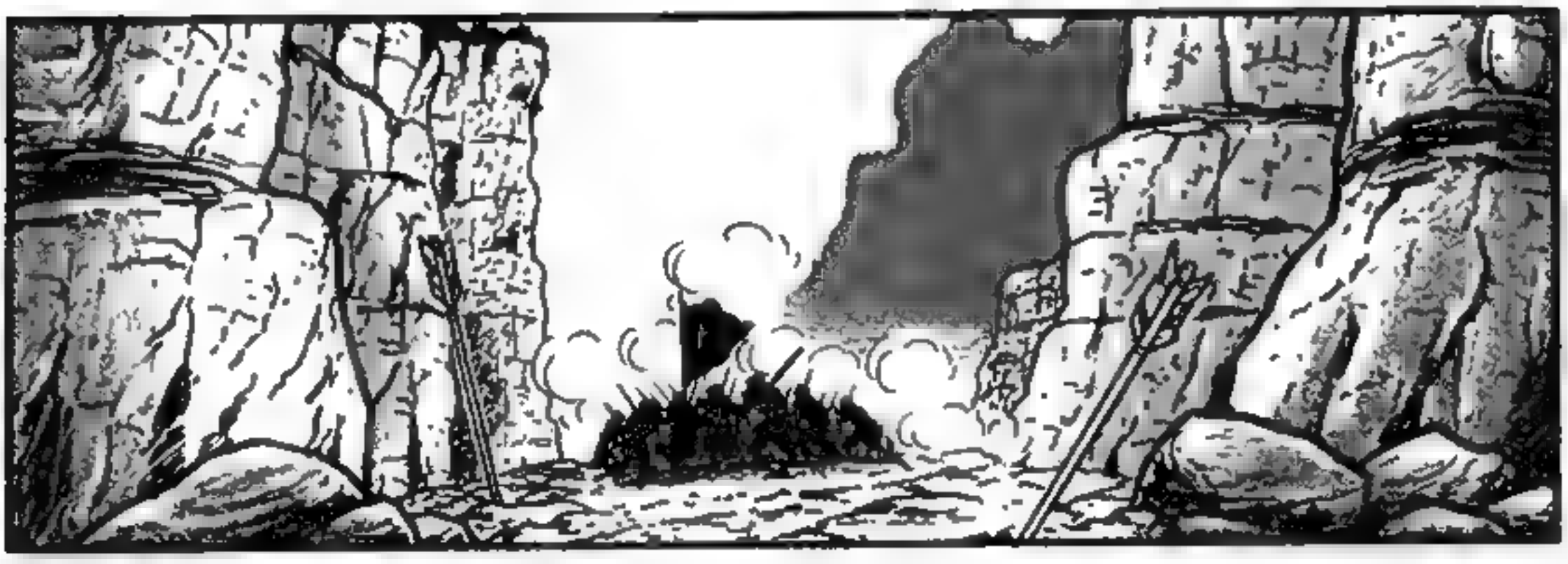


WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THAT TALK! STOP RIGHT THERE!

AHH!



CURSES!



DAMN IT, THEY'VE GOTTEN AWAY...

HMPH, THAT COWARD FLED IN SPITE OF ALL HIS BOASTING!
WHAT HAPPENED TO WANG PING, SIR?
YES, THEY MUST ALREADY BE ON THEIR WAY INTO HANZHONG.
IN ANY CASE, IF WANG PING GOT BEHIND US, THEN THAT MEANS YANG YI MUST HAVE TOO.

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THEN THERE'S NO NEED FOR US TO STAY HERE ANY LONGER. WE'LL HEAD FOR HANZHONG AS WELL.

SEE HOW THAT COWARD FLED IN SPITE OF ALL HIS TALK!? IT IS BECAUSE DEEP DOWN, HE KNOWS THAT MY CAUSE IS JUST! THE EMPEROR WILL SURELY GRANT OUR SIDE HIS FAVOUR SOON SO FOLLOW ME, MEN!

YES, MA DAI?
SIR!

WHAT!?

HALF OF OUR TROOPS HAVE DESERTED!

AGHH!

AS MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT THIS, WE CANNOT ENTER HANZHONG LIKE SO.

HOW DARE THEY! HAVE THEY FORGOTTEN HOW MUCH I LOOKED AFTER THEM ALL THESE YEARS!?

WHAT!?

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF DEFECTING TO WEI INSTEAD, MA DAI?

EVEN IF YOU WERE TO DEFECT TO WEI AND IN TIME LEAD AN INVASION OF SHU, YOU WILL STILL ONLY BE ONE OFFICER AMONG MANY... WILL YOU REALLY BE SATISFIED WITH THAT!?

I KNOW, BUT WE CANNOT CHARGE INTO HANZHONG WITH OUR FEW NUMBERS.

HOW CAN A GENERAL OF YOUR CALIBRE KNEEL DOWN BEFORE THE ENEMIES!?

TRUE... BUT WHAT I CANNOT SUFFER THE MOST IS TO TAKE ORDERS FROM THAT YANG YI!

MOREOVER, WITH ALL THE GRAIN, ARMS, AND ARMOUR STORED IN HANZHONG, YOU WILL HAVE DE FACTO CONTROL OF SHU!

I SAY WE CONTINUE OUR ADVANCE TO HANZHONG! ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS KILL YANG YI AND HIS SOLDIERS WILL BECOME OURS!

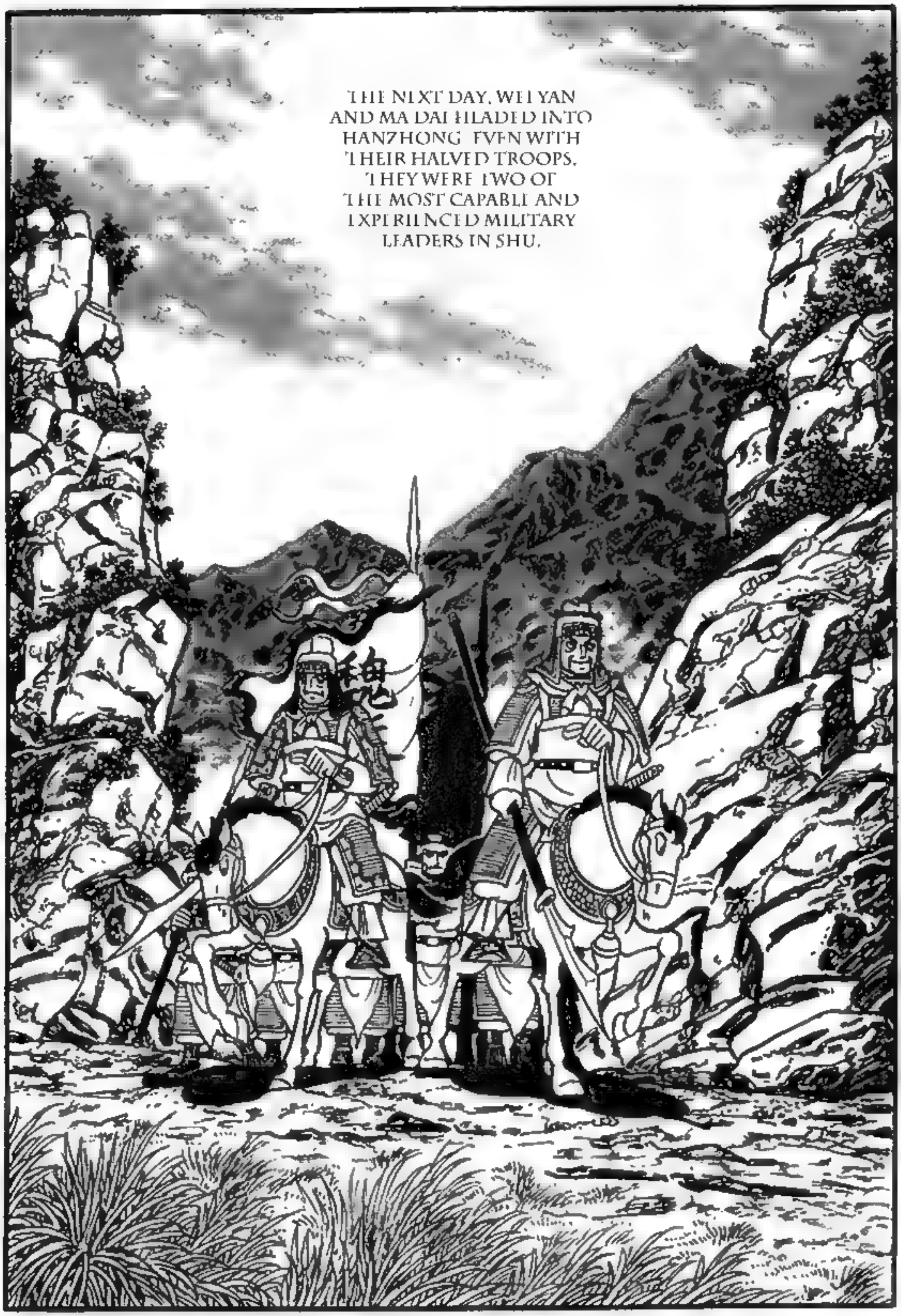
TRUE, IF I CAN JUST TAKE HANZHONG, THEN CHENGDU IS AS GOOD AS MINE...

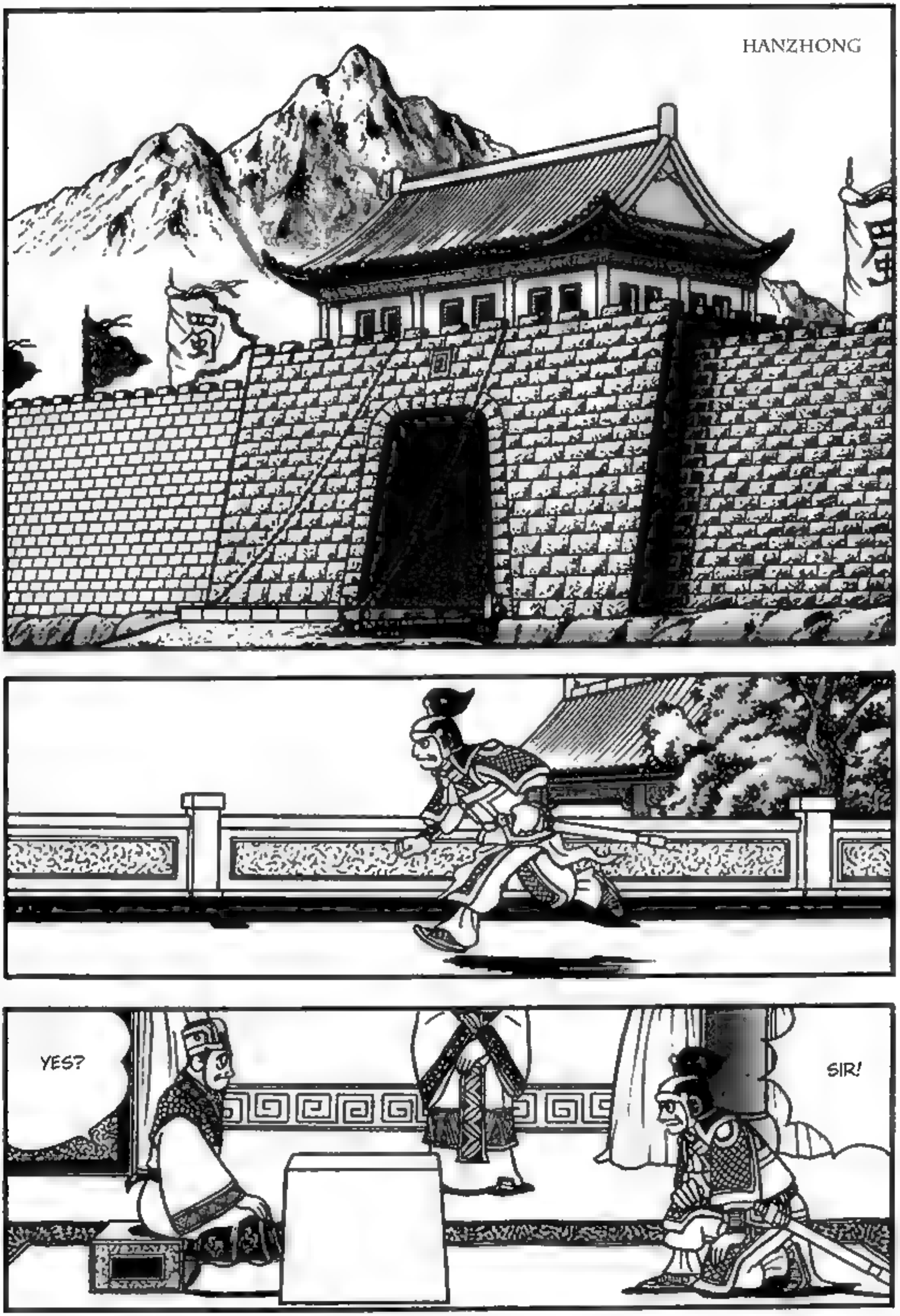
OF COURSE. IT WAS THE CHANCELLOR WHO HAD ME UNFAIRLY DEMOTED, AND I TOO, WILL NOT SUFFER UNDER HIS SECRETARY.

VERY WELL. DO I HAVE YOUR SUPPORT THEN, MA DAI?

RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON YANG YI, PERHAPS I SHOULD SET MY SIGHTS ON THE ENTIRE EMPIRE...

YES, LET'S MARCH INTO HANZHONG!
THEN LET'S DO IT. I'M CONFIDENT NO GENERAL IN SHU CAN BEAT ME RIGHT NOW.
ONCE I TAKE CONTROL OF SHU, I PROMISE TO SHARE THE SPOILS WITH YOU, MA DAI, SO LET'S GIVE IT OUR ALL!
YES!


THE NEXT DAY, WEI YAN
AND MA DAI WADED INTO
HANZHONG. EVEN WITH
THEIR HALVED TROOPS,
THEY WERE TWO OF
THE MOST CAPABLE AND
EXPERIENCED MILITARY
LEADERS IN SHU.


HANZHONG
YES?
SIR!

THEY'RE HERE!?

WEI YAN AND MA DAI'S TROOPS HAVE COME!

AHH!

YANG YI! COME OUT IF YOU'RE THERE!

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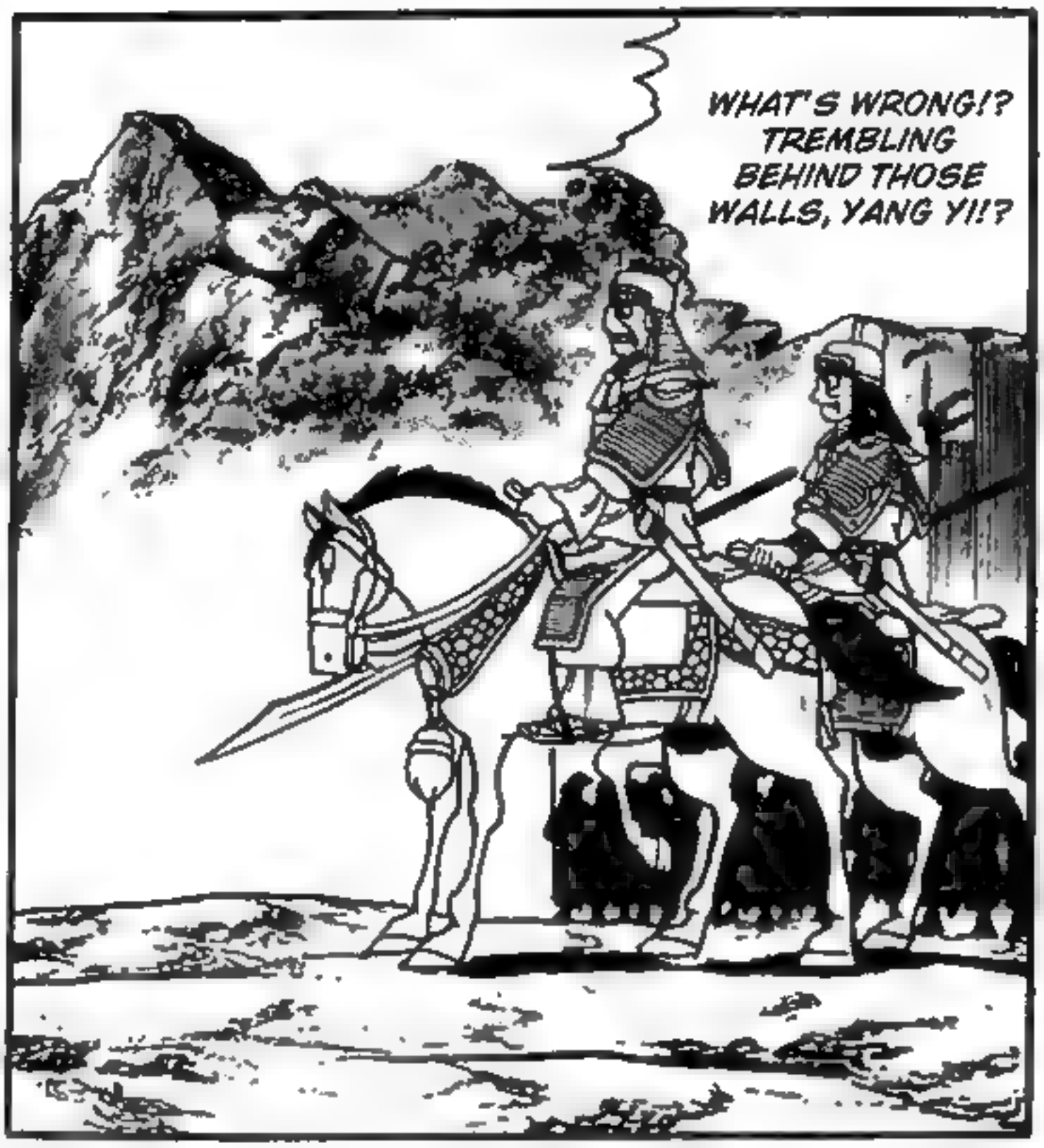
NO, WAIT!

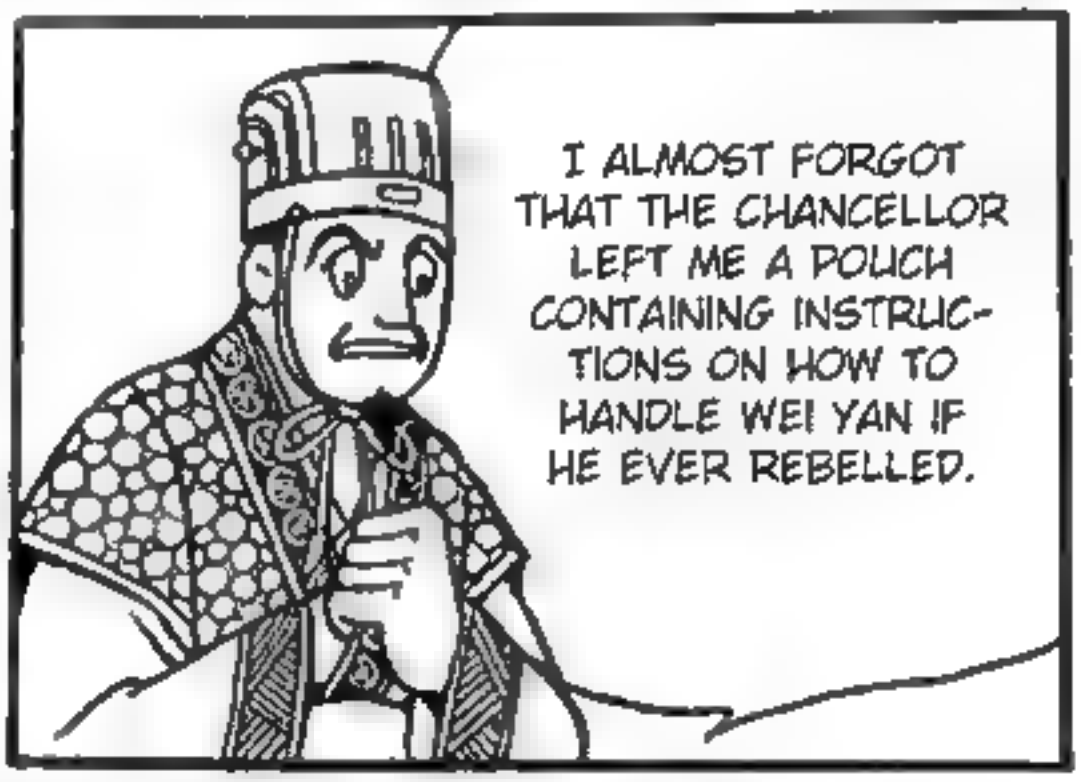
SHOULD WE GO OUT AND FIGHT, SIR?

IF WE WERE TO POSSIBLY SUFFER A DEFEAT, THEN OUR TROOPS MAY DEFECT EN MASSE TO WEI YAN!

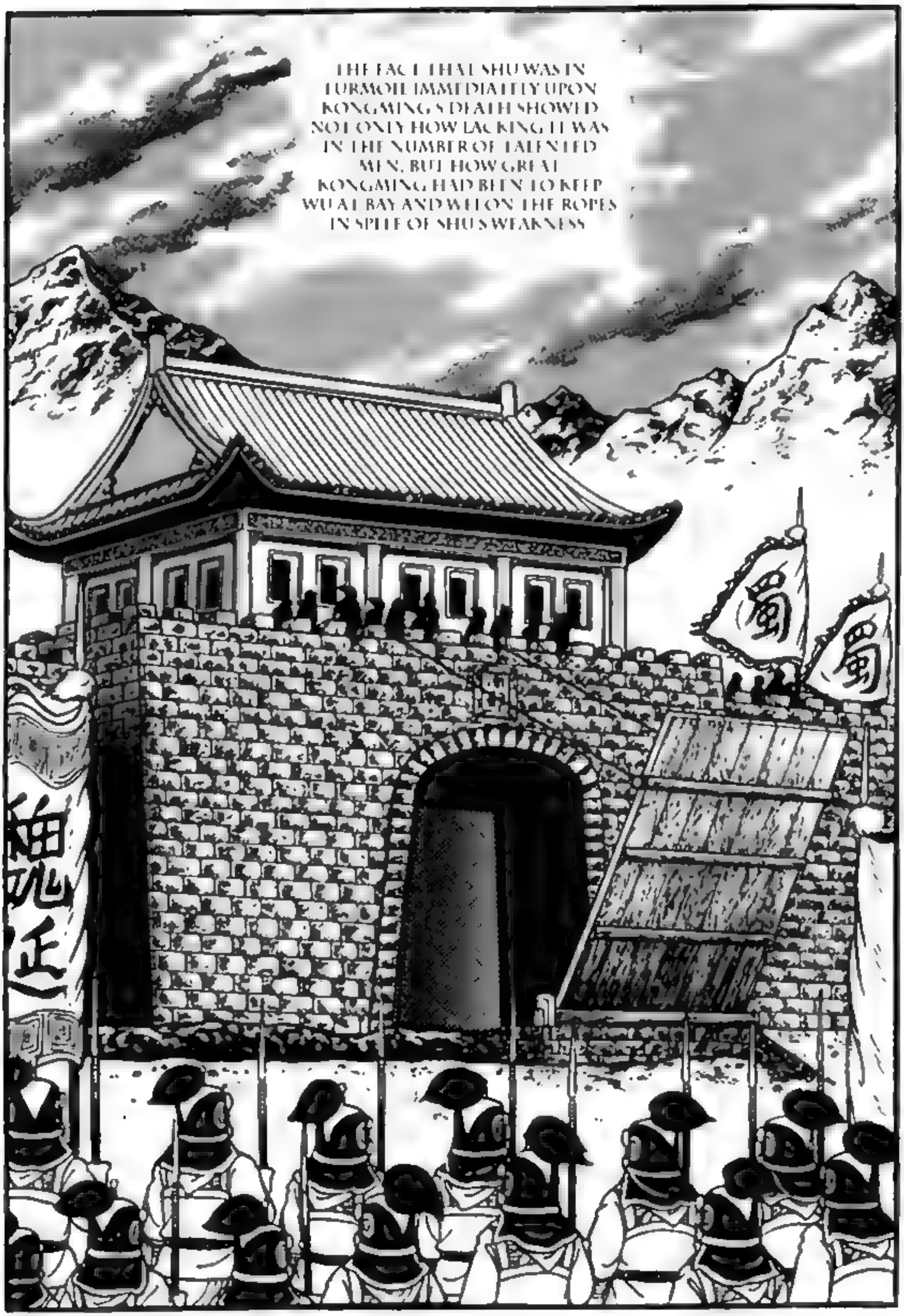
EVEN IF WE DO OUT-NUMBER THEM, THOSE TROOPS OUT THERE ARE LED BY WEI YAN AND MA DAI. A VICTORY WILL NOT BE EASY.


WHAT'S WRONG!? TREMBLING BEHIND THOSE WALLS, YANG YI!?

AHH! THAT'S IT!


I ALMOST FORGOT THAT THE CHANCELLOR LEFT ME A POUCH CONTAINING INSTRUC-TIONS ON HOW TO HANDLE WEI YAN IF HE EVER REBELLED.

OHH!


THE FACT THAT SHU WAS IN
TURMOIL IMMEDIATELY UPON
KONGMING'S DEATH SHOWED
NOT ONLY HOW LACKING IT WAS
IN THE NUMBER OF TALENTED
MEN, BUT HOW GREAT
KONGMING HAD BEEN TO KEEP
WU AT BAY AND WEI ON THE ROPES
IN SPITE OF SHU'S WEAKNESS
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WEI YAN'S END

COME OUT THIS INSTANT, YANG YI! I HAVE COME TO CONTEST YOUR SO-CALLED CLAIM THAT THE CHANCELLOR LEFT YOU IN CHARGE OF THE TROOPS!

SILENCE! I SWEAR BEFORE THE HEAVENS THAT THE CHANCELLOR ASKED ME TO SAFELY WITHDRAW THE ARMY BACK TO HANZHONG AFTER HIS DEATH!

HOW DARE YOU USE YOUR POSITION AS THE CHANCELLOR'S SECRETARY TO MAKE FALSE CLAIMS ABOUT HIS LAST WISHES!

YOU'RE THE SHAMELESS ONE HERE, TRYING TO JUSTIFY YOUR REBELLION!

HE SAYS WHEN WEI YAN ARRAYS HIS TROOPS BEFORE ME AND INTENDS TO FIGHT,

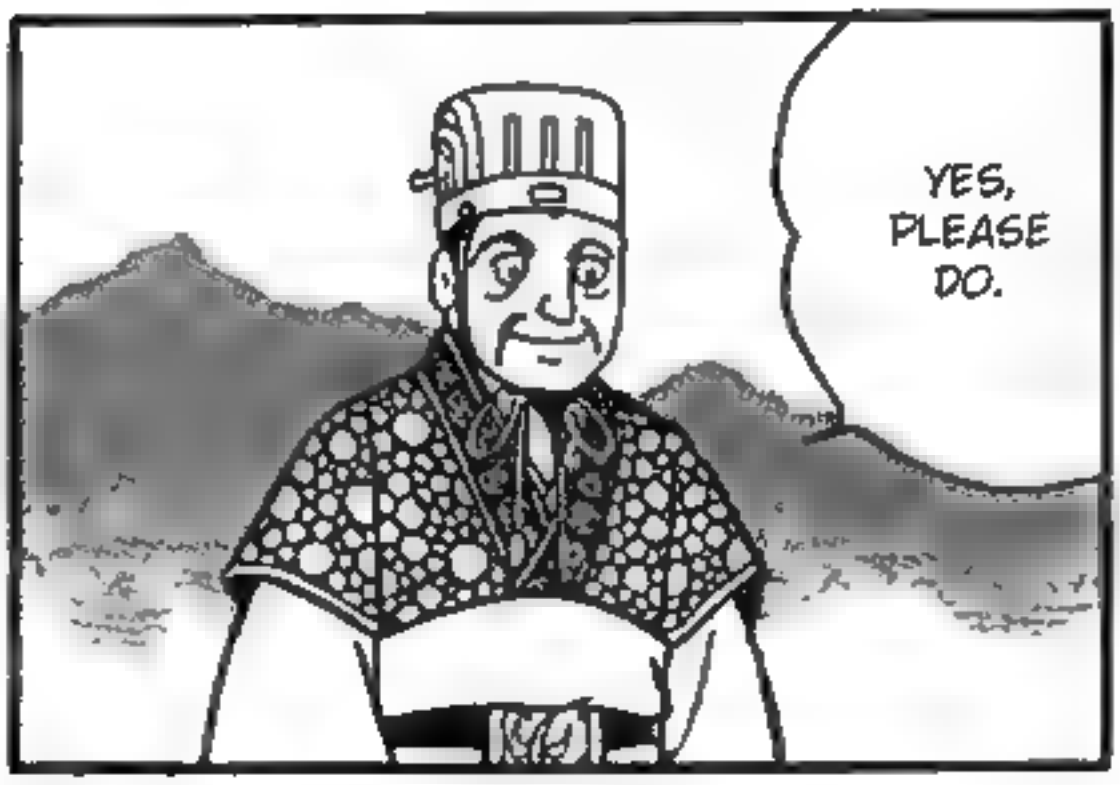
WHAT DID THE CHANCELLOR ADVISE IN THAT LETTER?

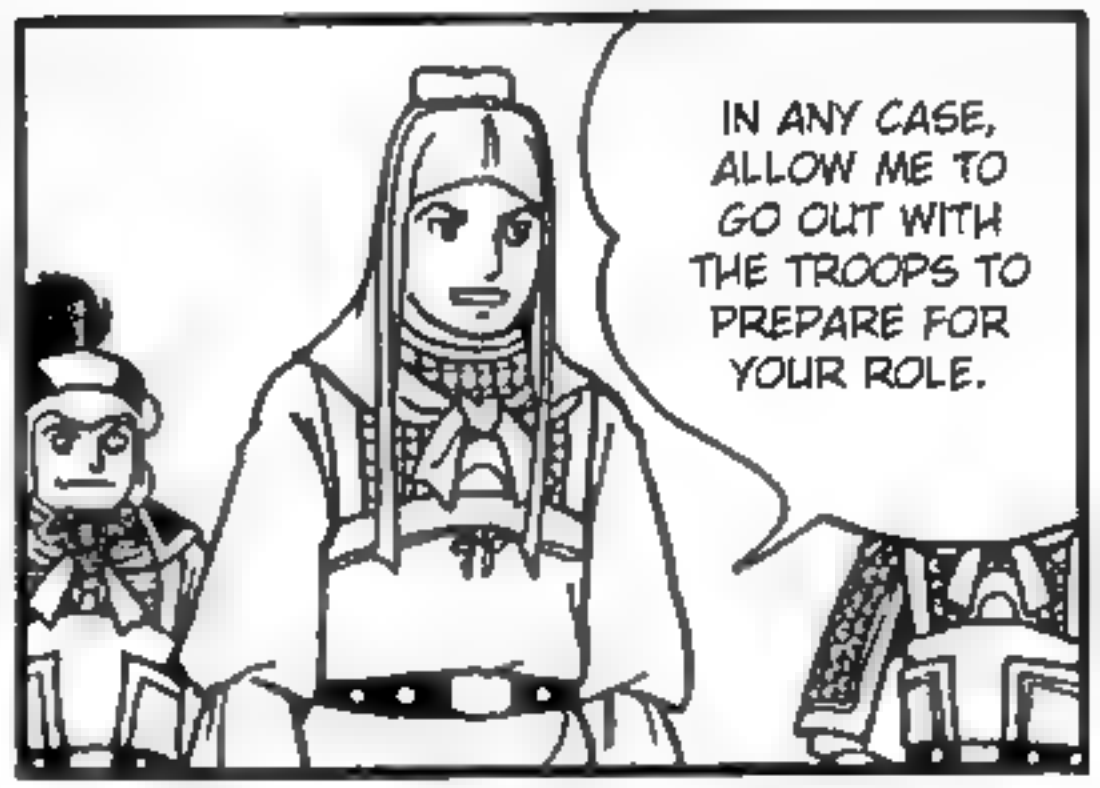
?

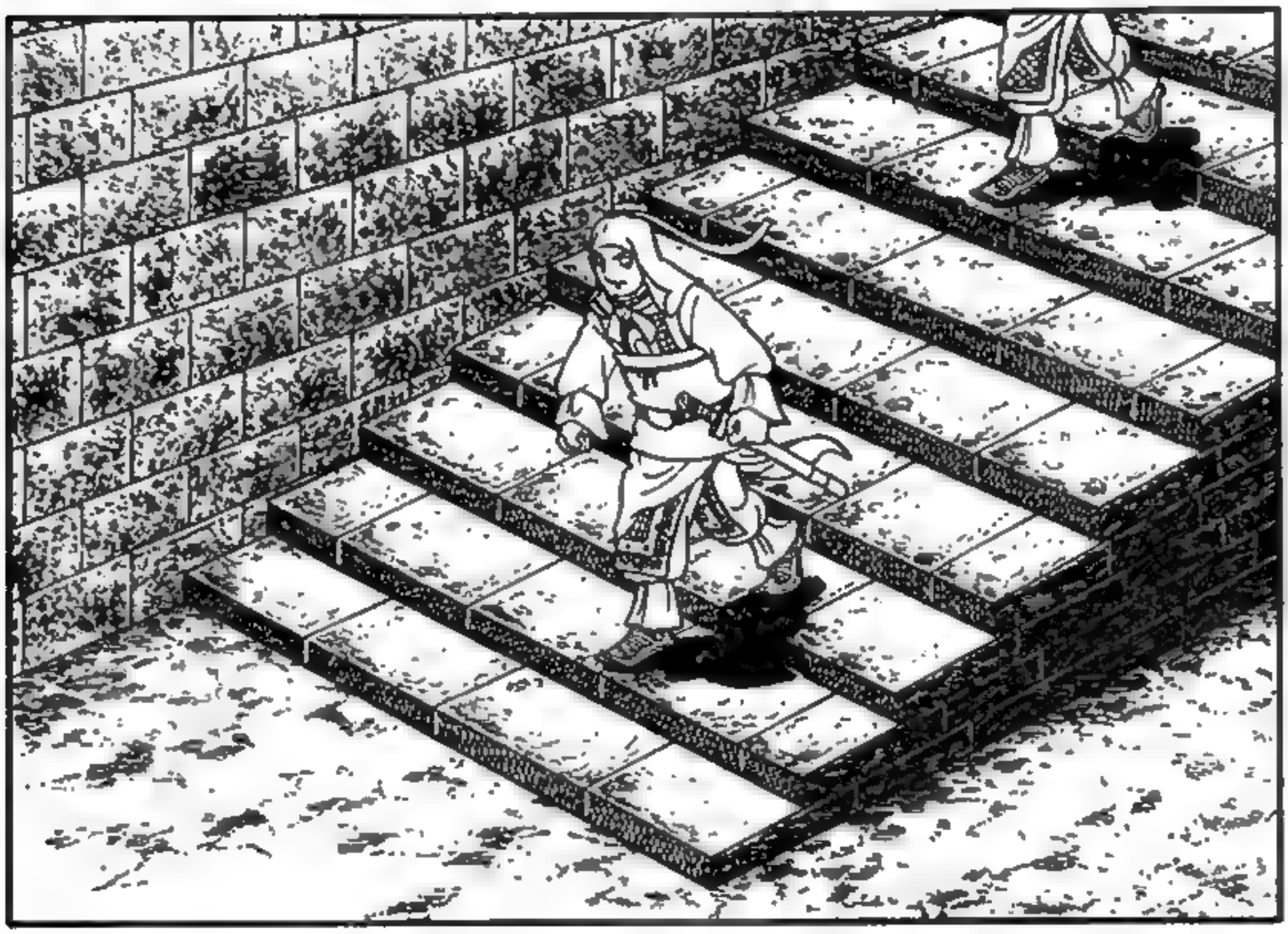
I SHOULD ASK HIM TO SHOUT, "WHO DARES KILL ME," THREE TIMES ON HORSEBACK.

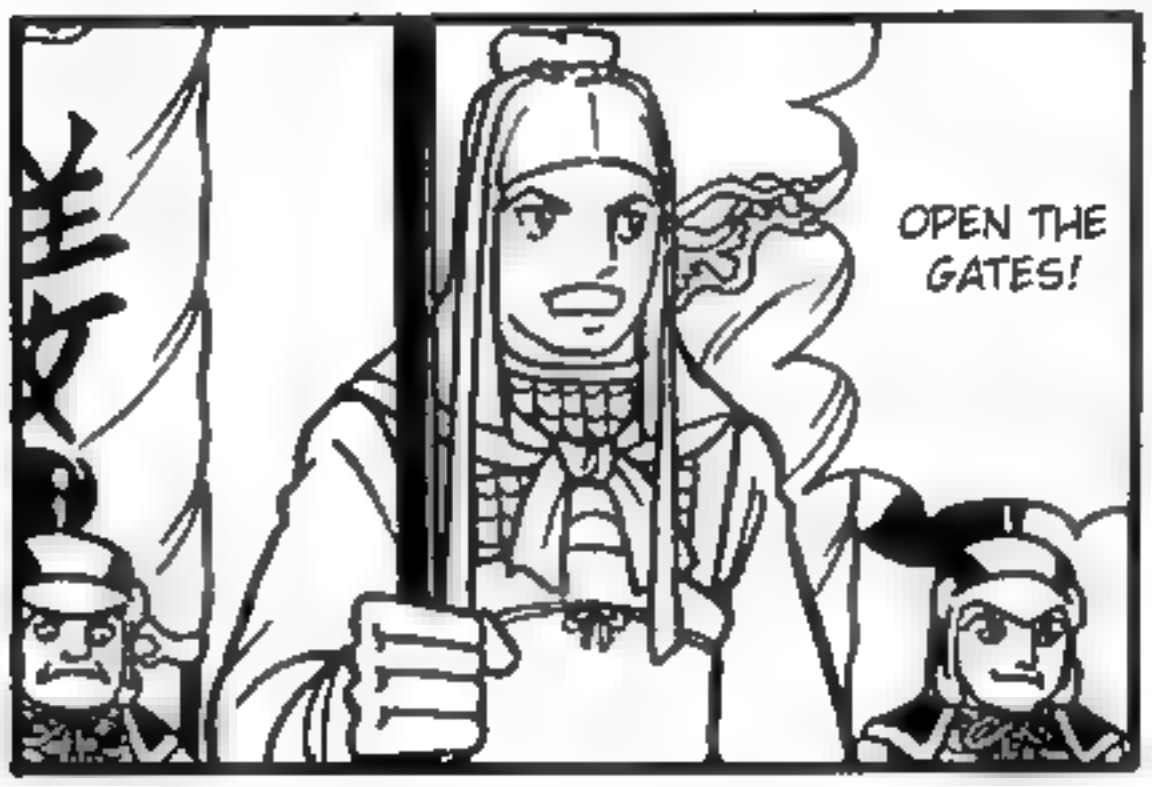
I DON'T HAVE A CLUE, BUT THE CHANCELLOR CLEARLY LAID SOME PLAN.

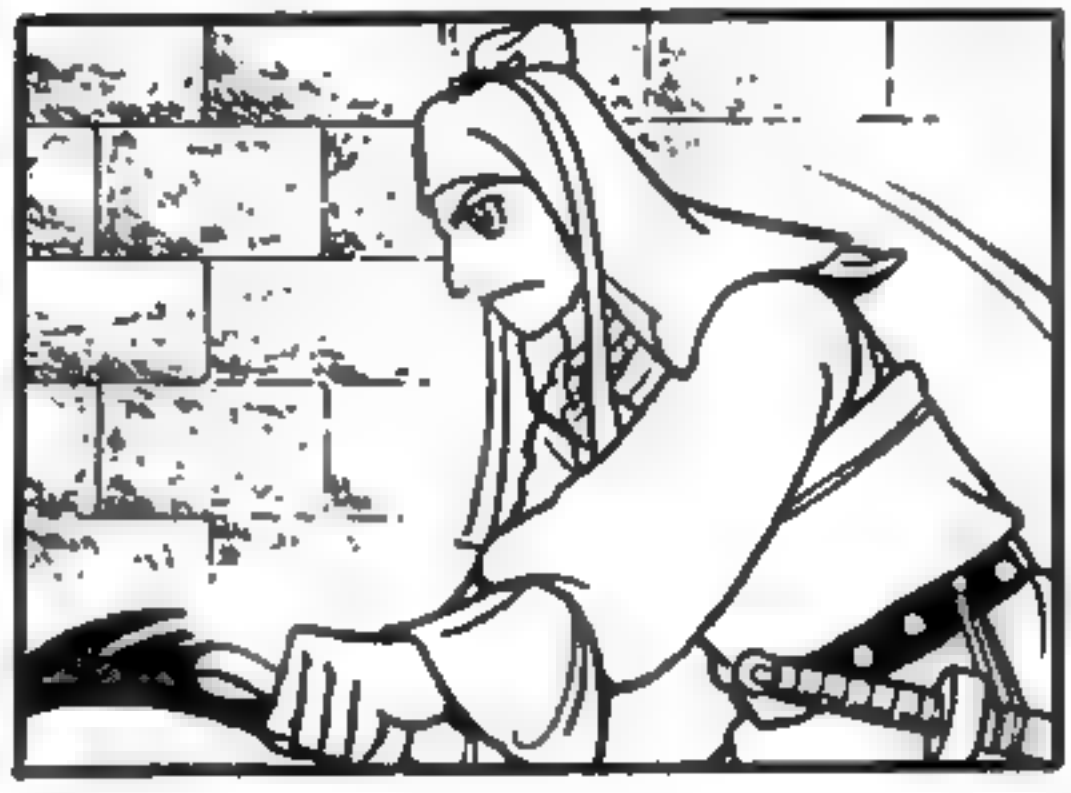
WHAT'S THE MEANING BEHIND THIS?

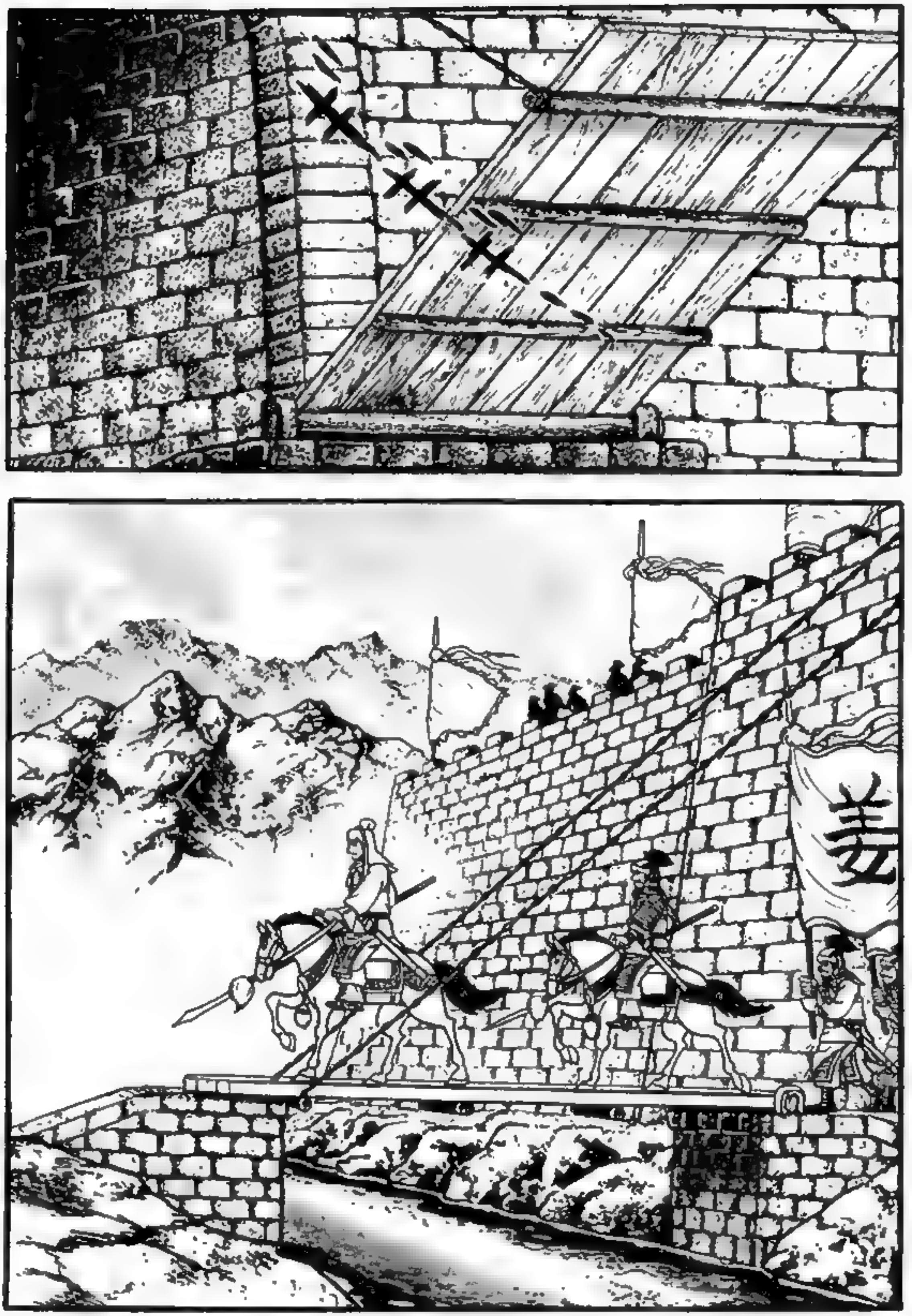

YES, PLEASE DO.


IN ANY CASE, ALLOW ME TO GO OUT WITH THE TROOPS TO PREPARE FOR YOUR ROLE.




OPEN THE GATES!





WEI YAN! WHAT HAS THE CHANCELLOR EVER DONE TO BUY YOUR RESENTMENT!? WHY DO YOU ACT TO DEFY HIS WILL AT EVERY STEP EVEN AFTER HIS DEATH!?

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I AM NOT DEFYING HIS WILL AND THIS IS BETWEEN YANG YI AND ME! IT DOES NOT CONCERN YOU!

THAT IS ONLY BECAUSE YOU REFUSED TO OBEY THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW OUR FORCES!

HE EVEN ABANDONED ME AND MY TROOPS IN THE LAST CAMPAIGN!

YOU ARE OF COURSE UNAWARE OF THIS, BUT YANG YI HAS ONLY REPORTED ILL THINGS ABOUT ME TO THE CHANCELLOR OVER THE YEARS!

WHEN MA SU MADE A COSTLY ERROR DUE TO FOOLISH ARROGANCE, THE CHANCELLOR EXECUTED HIM! BUT HE LET YOUR TRANSGRESSION SLIDE AND SPARED YOU! HOW DARE YOU FORGET HIS KINDNESS TO YOU!

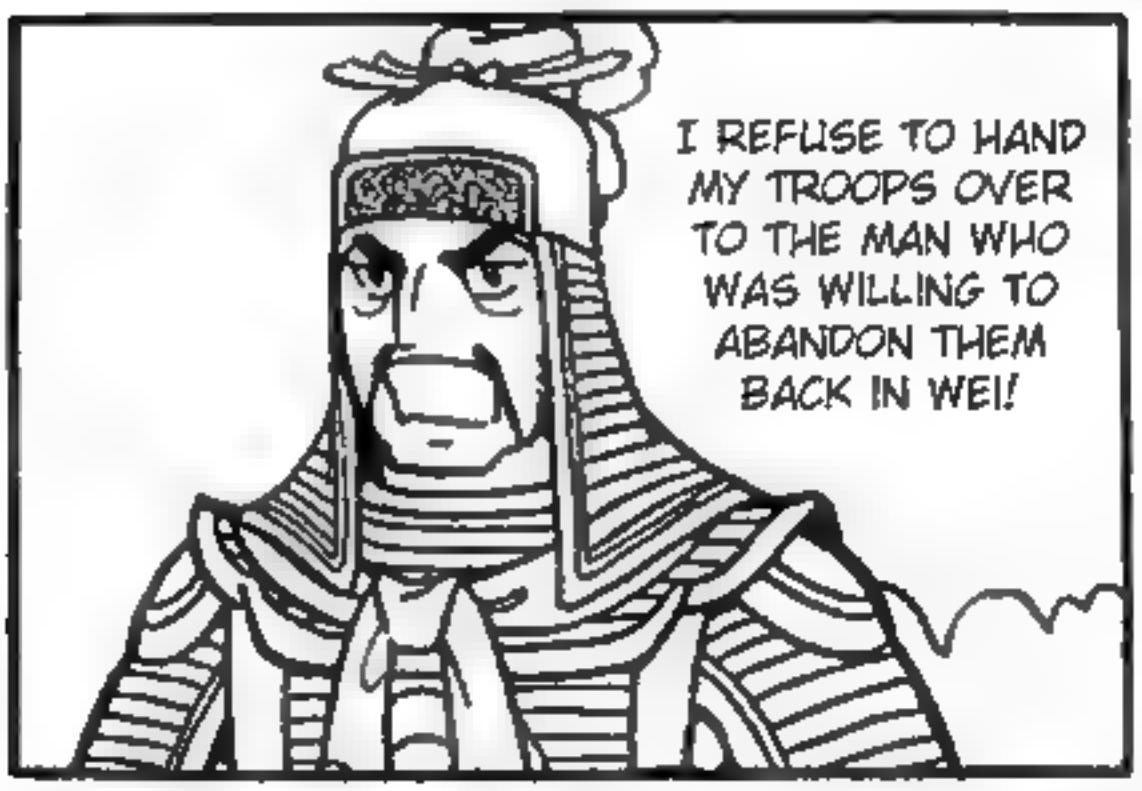
EVERYONE IN THE ARMY KNOWS JUST HOW MUCH YOU COMPLAINED ABOUT THE CHANCELLOR'S COMMAND OF THE NORTHERN CAMPAIGNS! AT JI GORGE, YOU EVEN DISOBEYED HIS ORDERS TO SLOW DOWN YOUR ADVANCE, WHICH LED TO YOUR DEFEAT AT SIMA YI'S HANDS!

魏正

HMPH! THAT'S ONLY BECAUSE THE CHANCELLOR NEEDED MY TALENTS FOR HIS CAMPAIGNS!

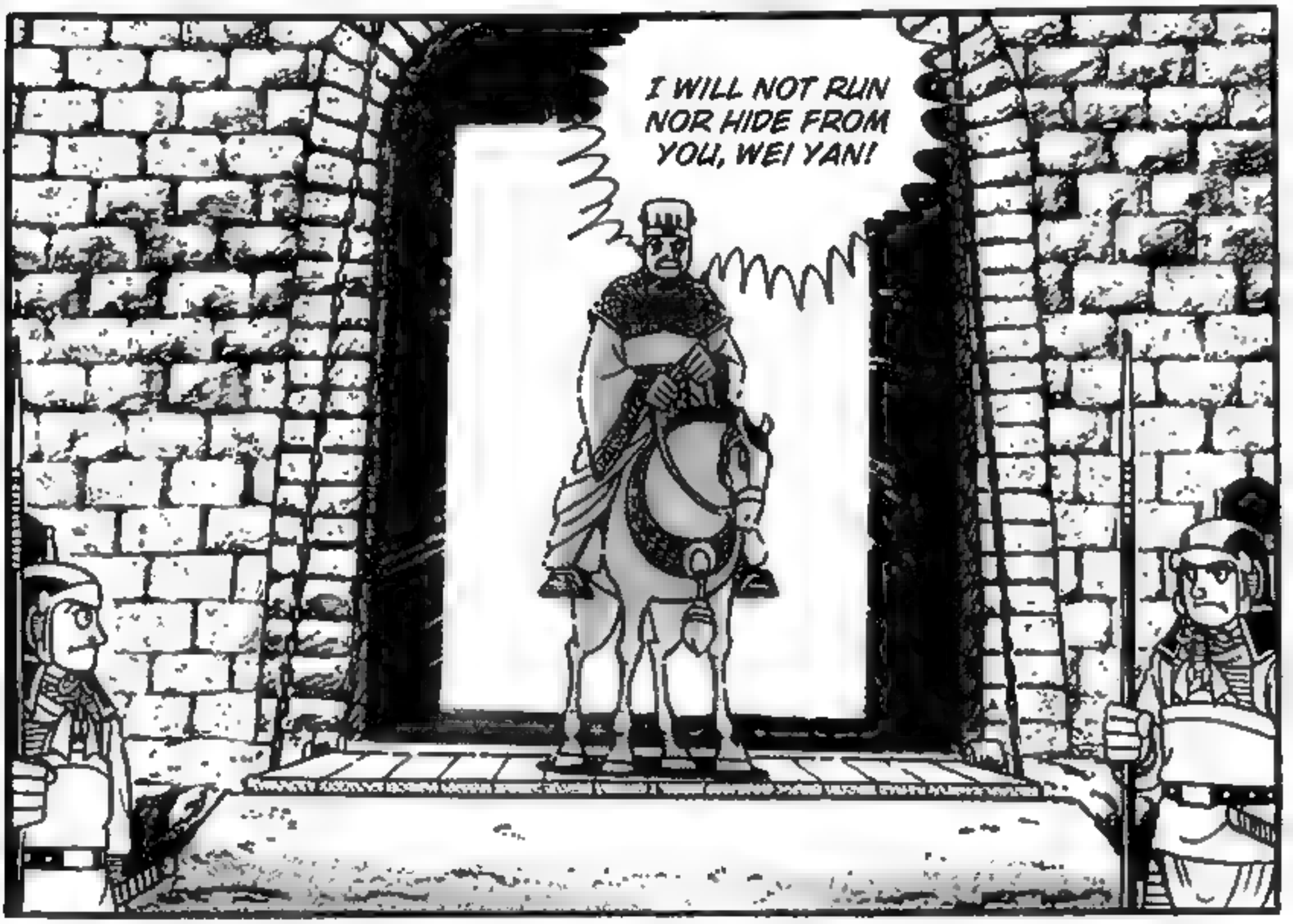
SILENCE! THAT IS NOT FOR YOU TO DECIDE! IT IS THE EMPEROR'S DECISION!

THINK CAREFULLY, JIANG WEI! NOW THAT THE CHANCELLOR IS GONE, WHO DO YOU REALLY THINK CAN DEFEND SHU!? THE ANSWER IS ME ALONE!


I REFUSE TO HAND MY TROOPS OVER TO THE MAN WHO WAS WILLING TO ABANDON THEM BACK IN WEI!

THE ONLY CAUSE YOU ARE HELPING IS THAT OF WEI BY PUTTING SHU IN TURMOIL! SUBMIT YOUR TROOPS TO YANG YI!

YANG YI! COME OUT THIS INSTANT!


I WILL NOT RUN NOR HIDE FROM YOU, WEI YAN!

SILENCE!

SO YOU FINALLY SHOW YOURSELF!

WHAT!?
TRUE, I ADMIT I REPORTED ILL THINGS ABOUT YOU TO THE CHANCELLOR! BUT THAT WAS BECAUSE HE WAS SUSPICIOUS OF YOUR UNRULY NATURE AND ASKED ME TO KEEP A CAREFUL WATCH! AND IT'S CLEAR TO ALL THAT HIS SUSPICIONS WERE CORRECT, AS EVIDENCED BY YOUR REBELLION THE MOMENT HE PASSED AWAY!

WAIT!

MY RAGE WILL NOT SUBSIDE UNTIL I HAVE YOUR HEAD!

I WILL RELINQUISH CONTROL OF HANZHONG TO YOU IF YOU DARE TO SHOUT THRICE, "WHO DARES KILL ME!?" BUT I DOUBT YOU HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO DO THAT!

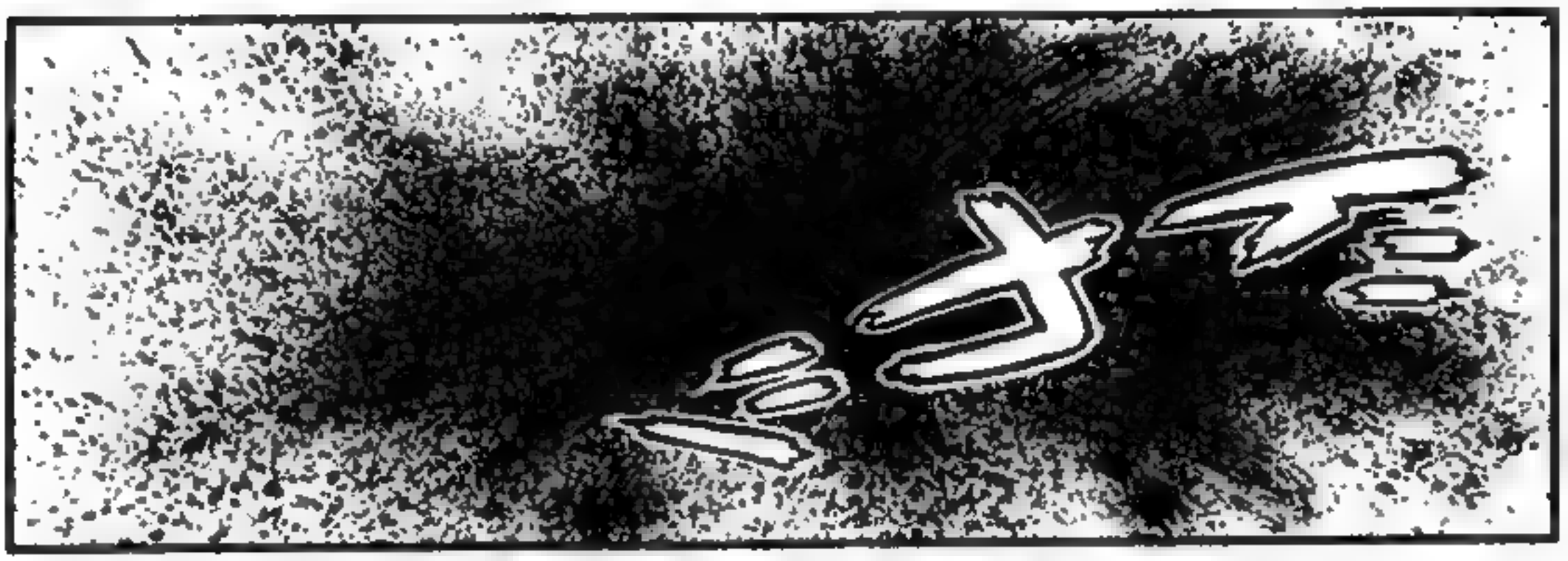
HAHAHA!
AHAHAHAHA!
HAHAHA!

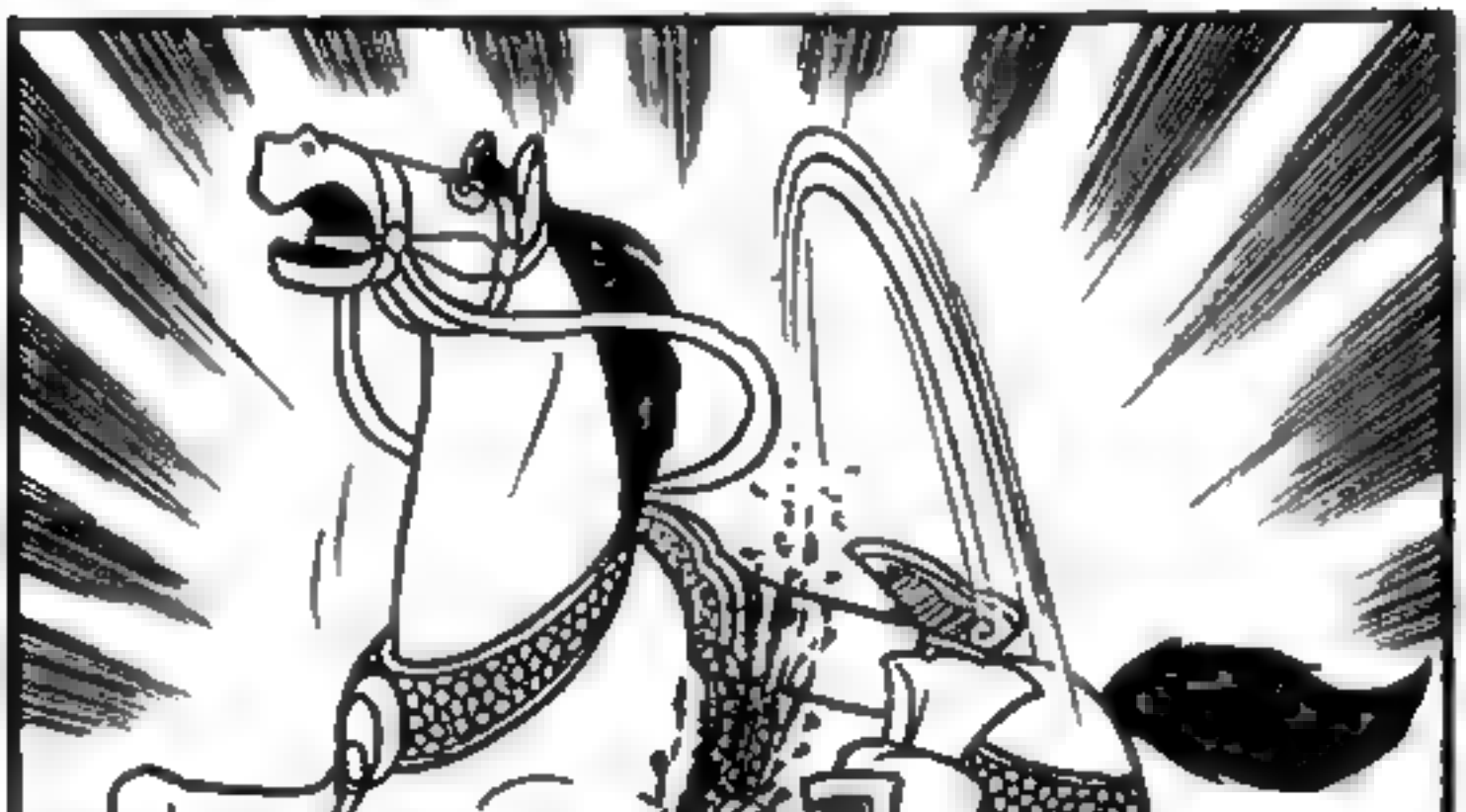
WERE THE CHANCELLOR STILL ALIVE, I ADMIT I WOULD NOT HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO SAY THAT. BUT NOW THAT HE IS NO MORE, THERE IS NO MAN IN SHU WHO WOULD DARE TURN HIS BLADE AGAINST ME! I CAN SAY THAT NOT JUST THRICE, BUT 10,000 TIMES IF YOU WANTED!

WHO DARES KILL ME!? WHO DARES KILL ME!? WHO-

WHA-

I DARE!





AH!

AGHH!

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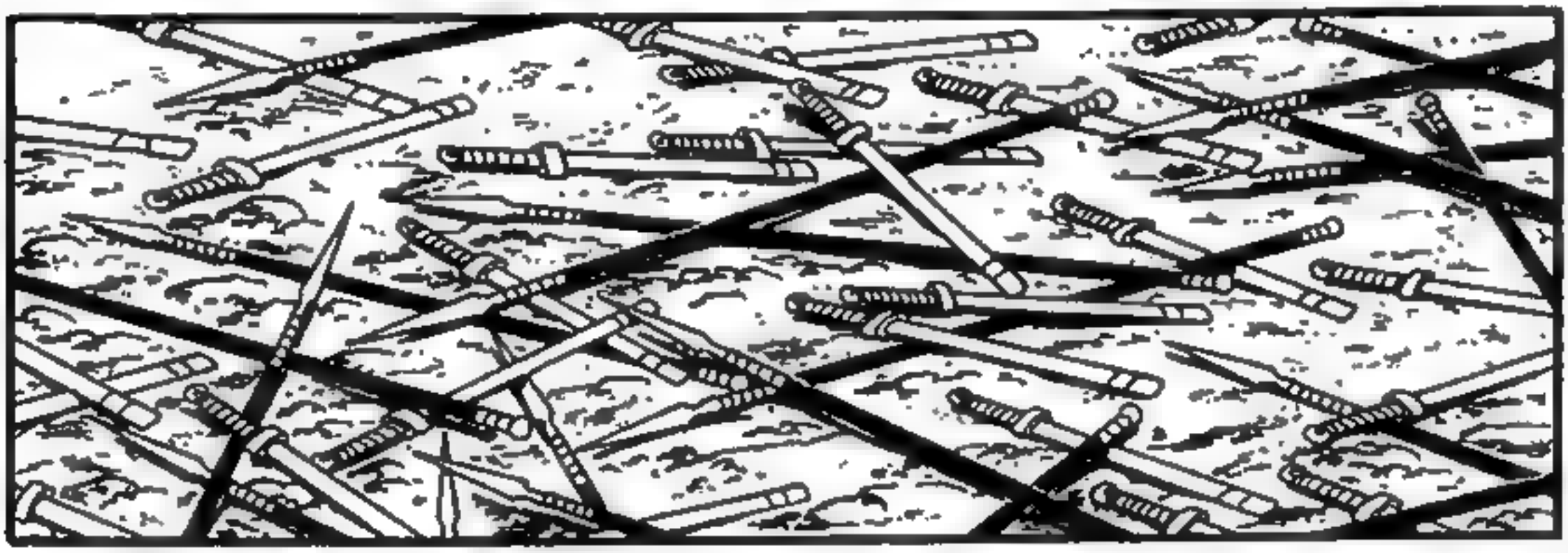
ANY MAN WHO STILL OPPOSES YANG YI WILL FACE MY BLADE!

.....

IF YOU ARE LOYAL TO SHU, THROW DOWN YOUR ARMS NOW!

.....



GOOD.

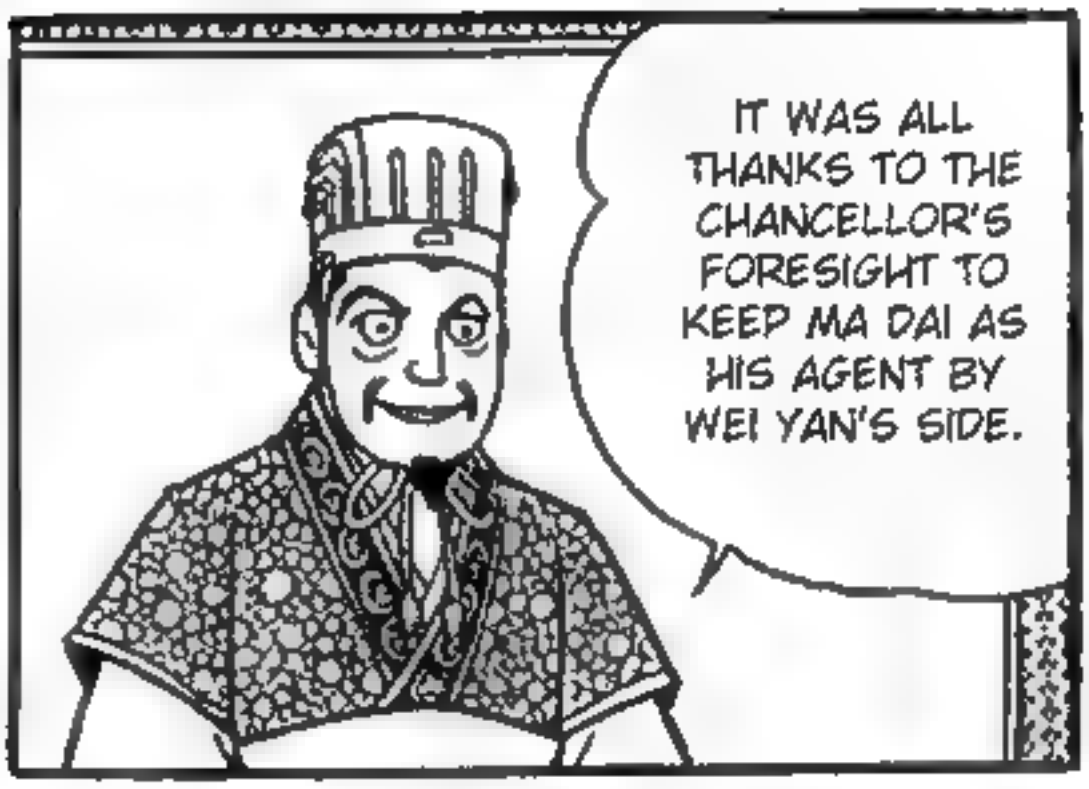
TRULY, YOUR LOYALTY IS UNSHAKEABLE, IN SPITE OF THE UNJUST DEMOTION YOU HAD TO SUFFER, MA DAI!
AND THAT ONCE HE OPENLY RAISED HIS FLAG IN REBELLION, I MUST SLAY HIM WHEN I SAW MY CHANCE.
BEFORE HIS DEATH, THE CHANCELLOR INSTRUCTED ME TO STAY BY WEI YAN'S SIDE AND PREVENT HIS DEFECTION TO WEI AT ALL COSTS.

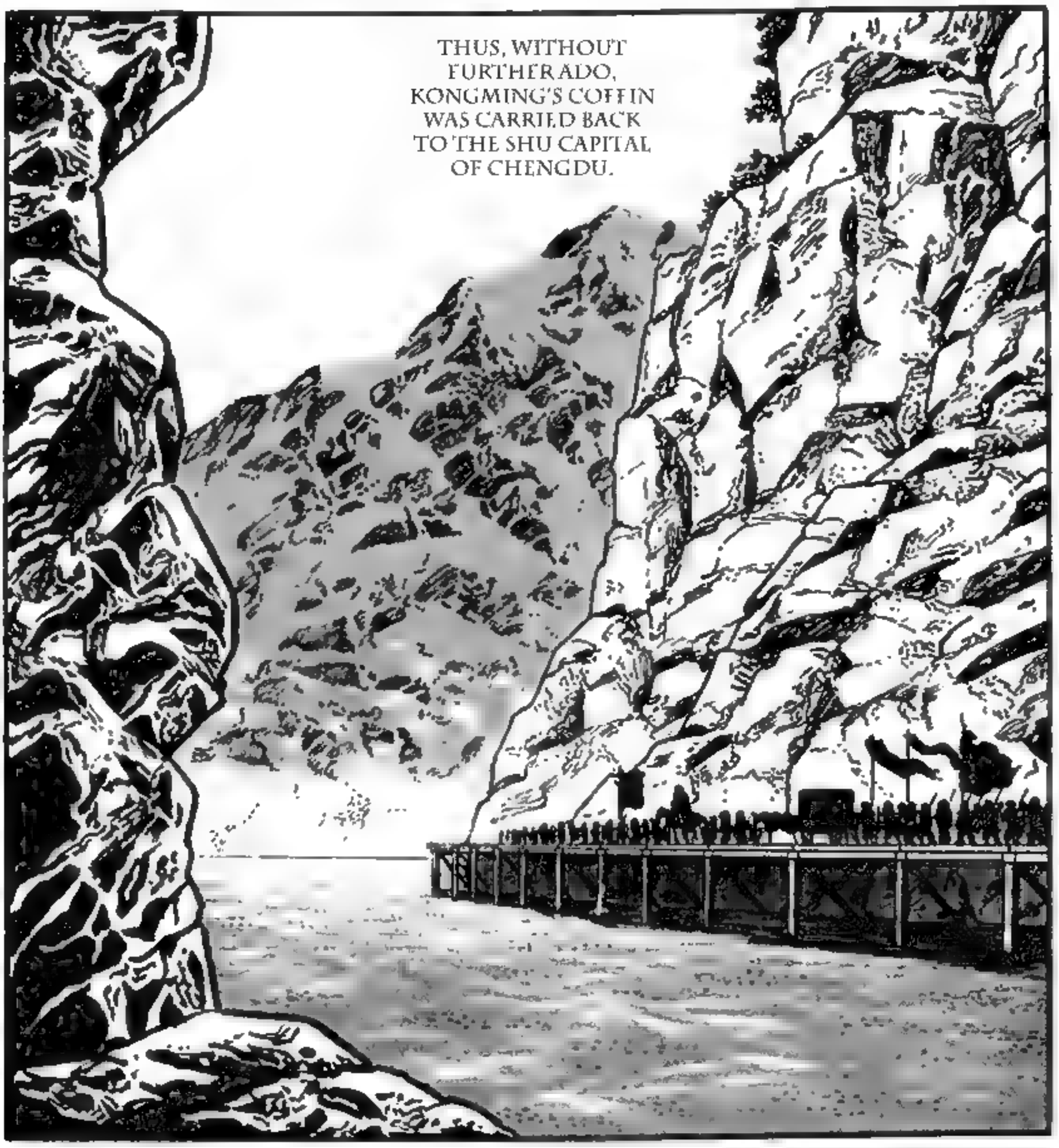
SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, DONG YUN ARRIVED AT LAST FROM CHENGDU TO MEDIATE BOTH SIDES.

YES, HE WAS JUSTLY EXECUTED FOR REBELLING, JUST AS THE CHANCELLOR PREDICTED.

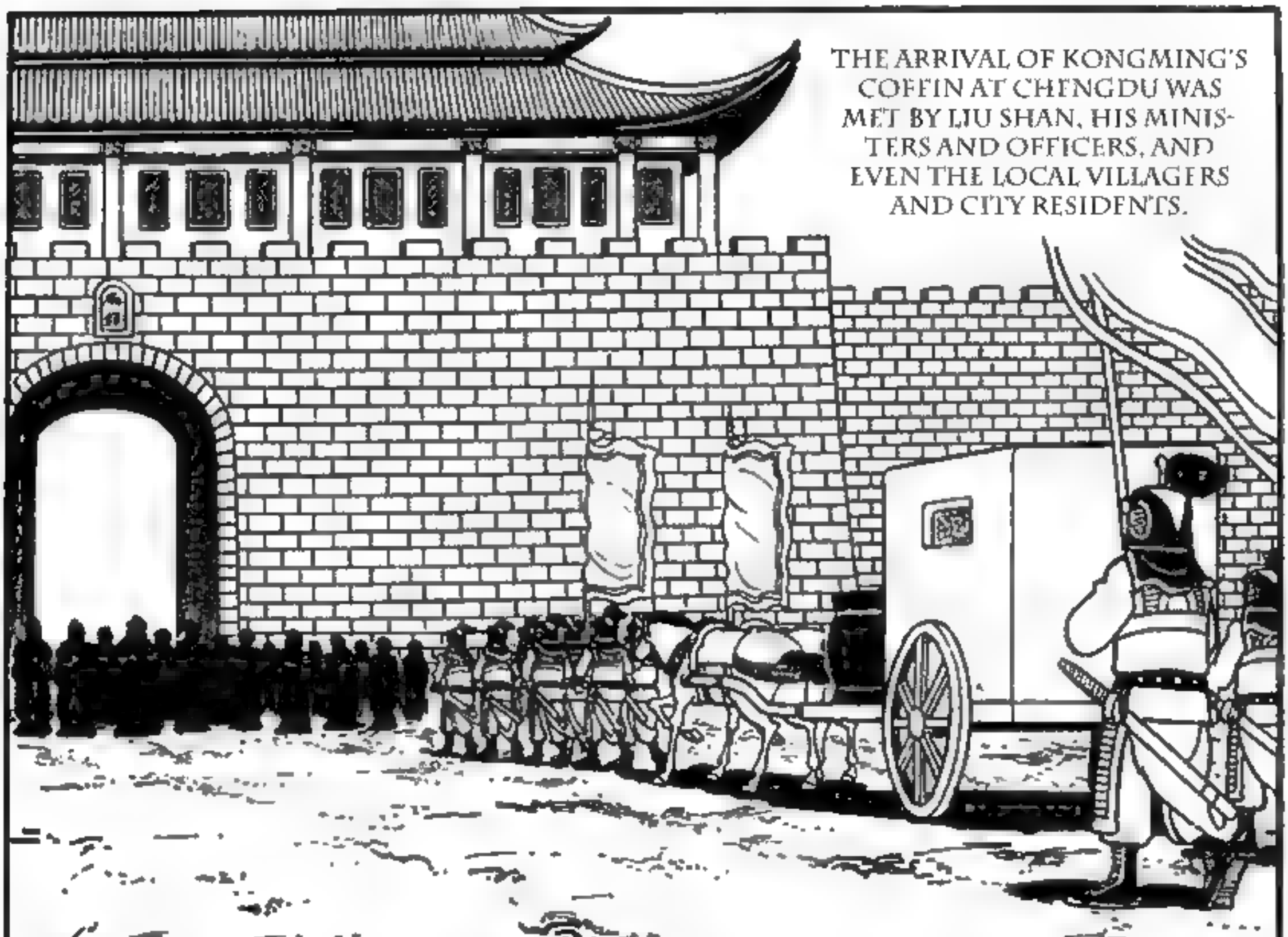
WEI YAN WAS SLAIN!?

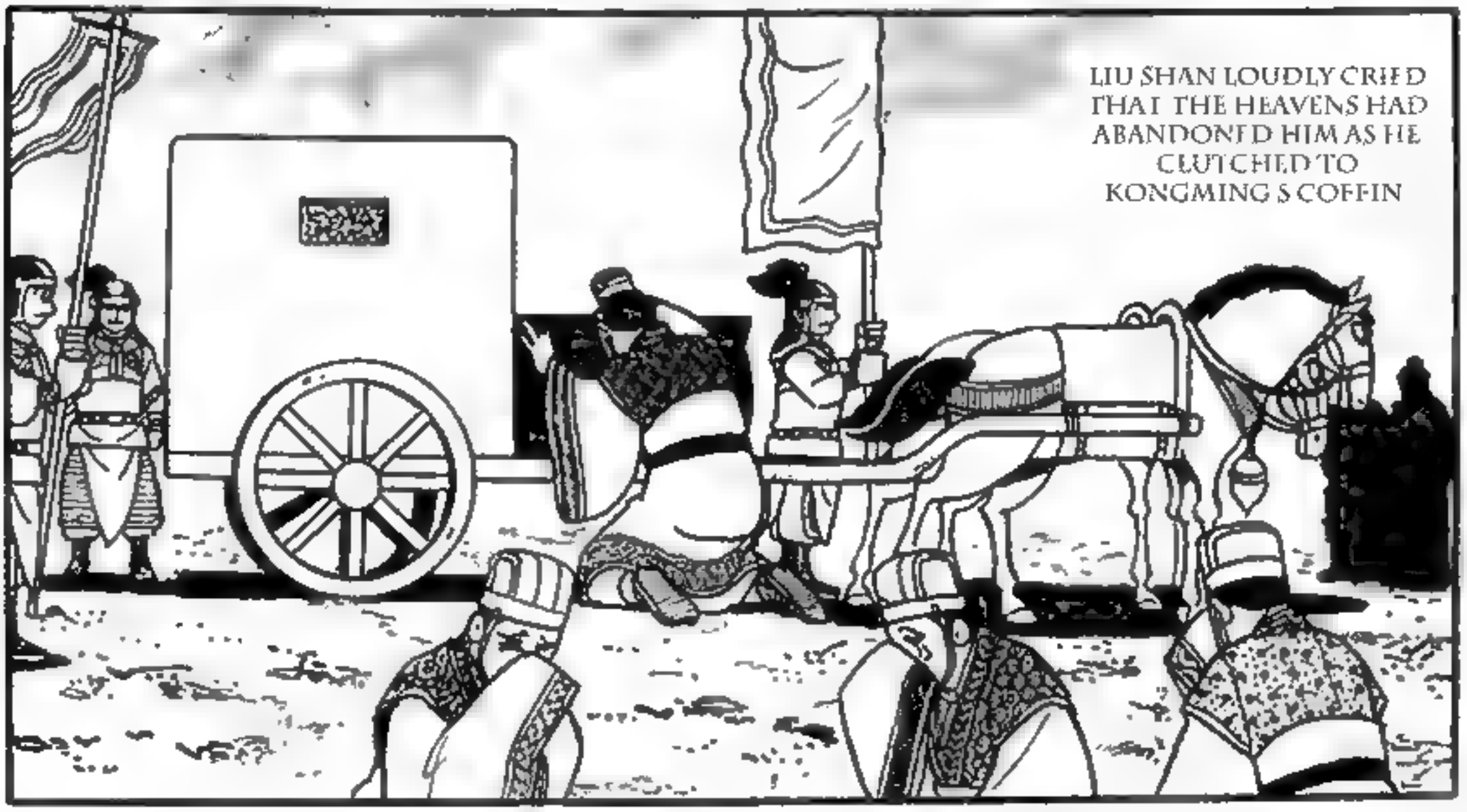
I GUESS I ARRIVED TOO LATE...
I... I SEE...

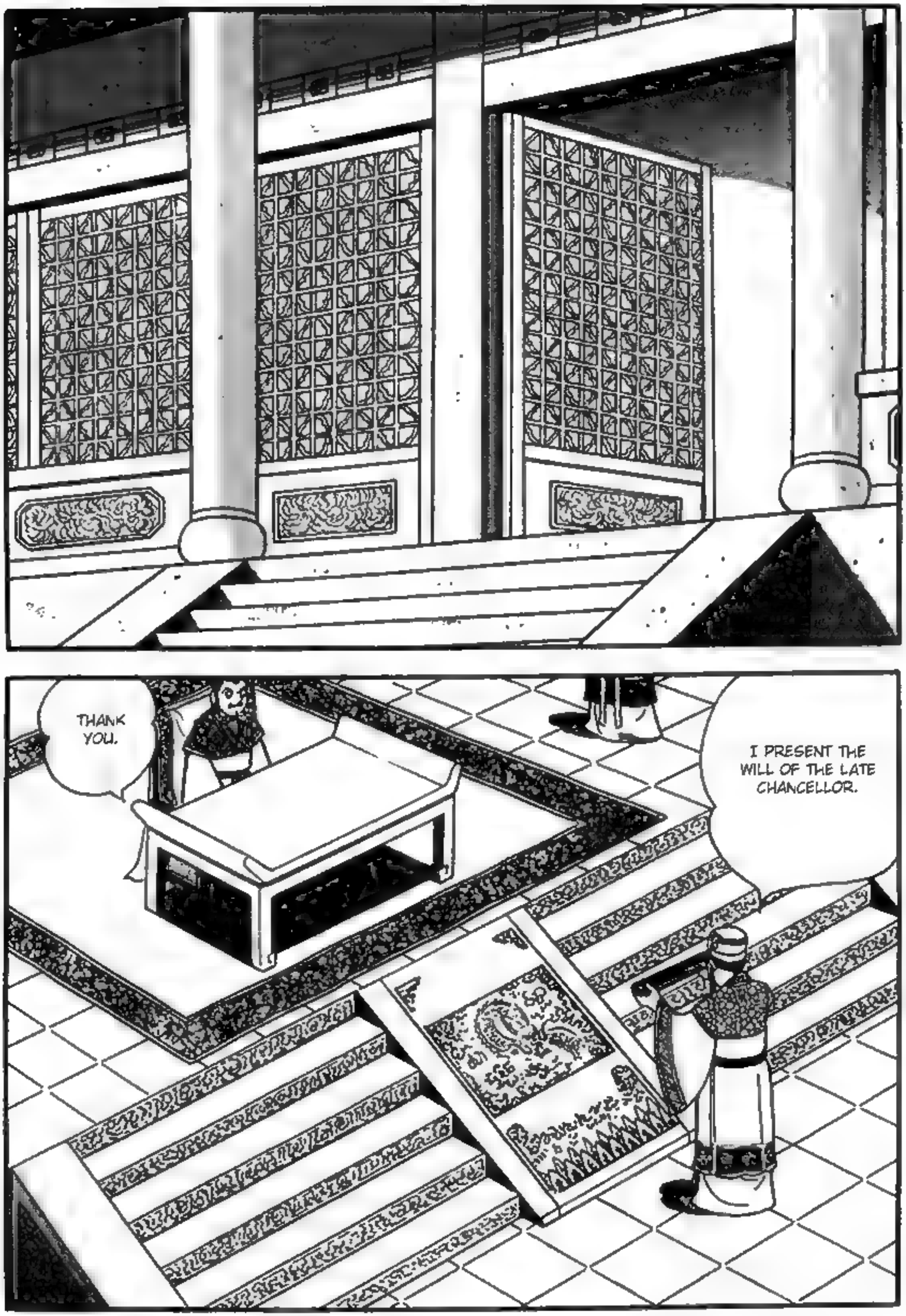

IT WAS ALL THANKS TO THE CHANCELLOR'S FORESIGHT TO KEEP MA DAI AS HIS AGENT BY WEI YAN'S SIDE.

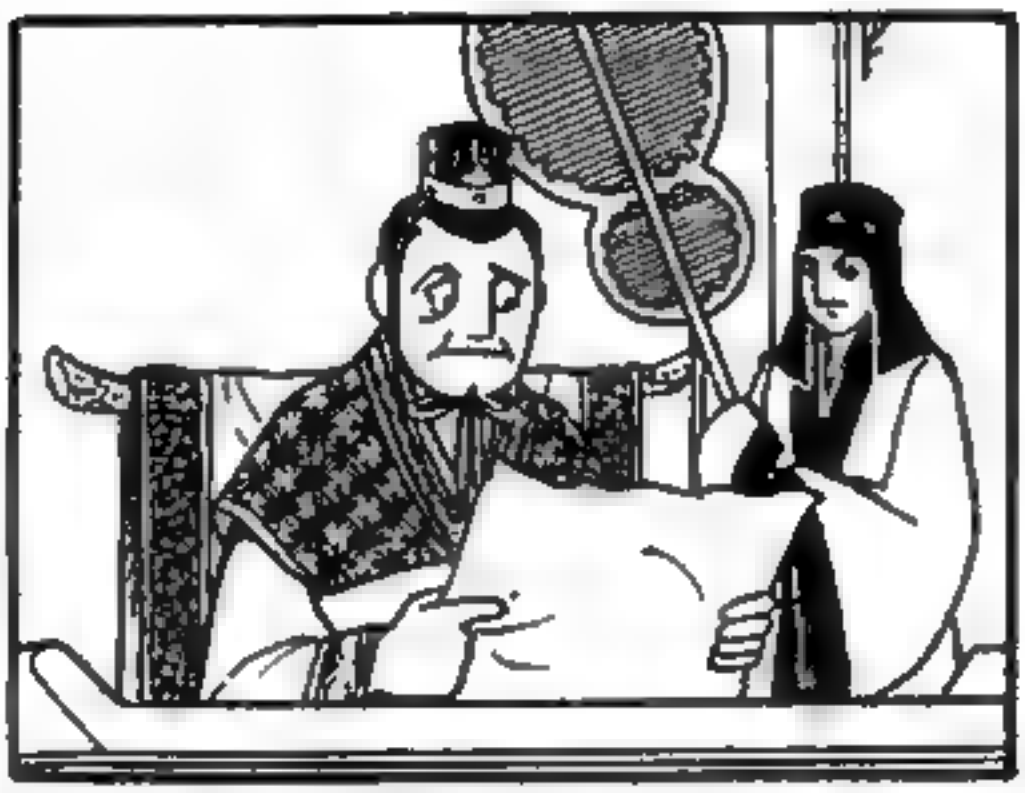

THUS, WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, KONGMING'S COFFIN WAS CARRIED BACK TO THE SHU CAPITAL OF CHENGDU.

KONGMING'S WILL

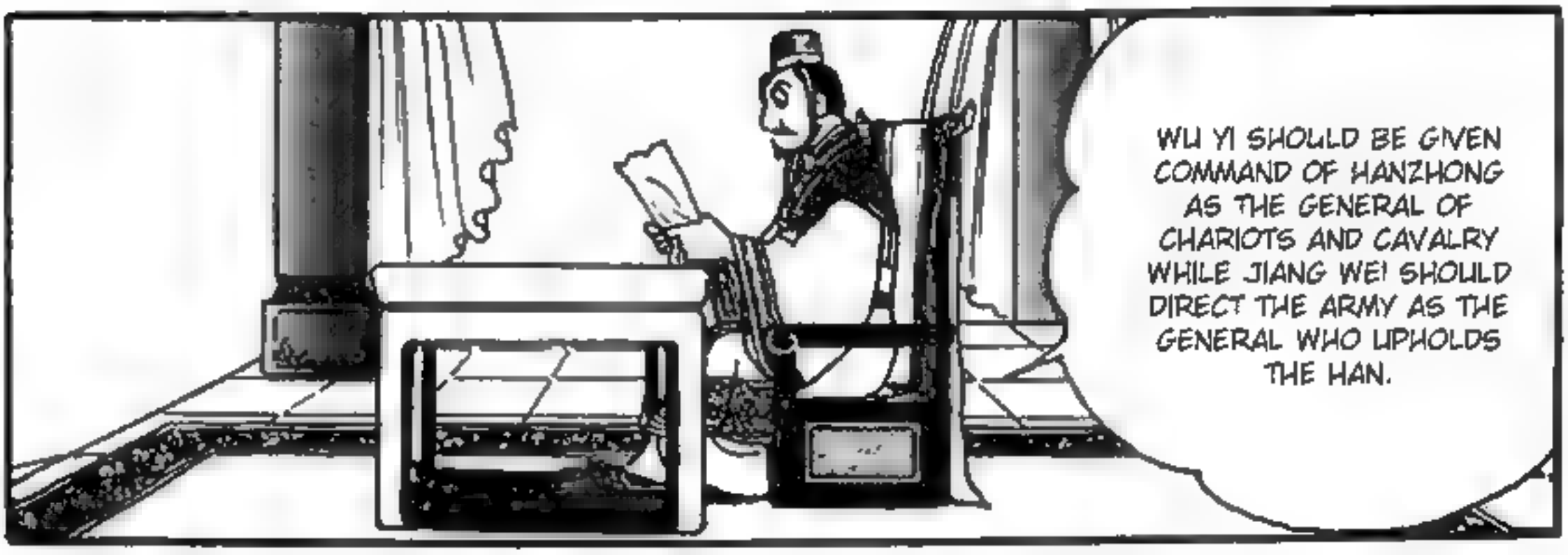

THE ARRIVAL OF KONGMING'S COFFIN AT CHENGDU WAS MET BY LIU SHAN, HIS MINISTERS AND OFFICERS, AND EVEN THE LOCAL VILLAGERS AND CITY RESIDENTS.




THANK YOU.
I PRESENT THE WILL OF THE LATE CHANCELLOR.



THE WILL RECOMMENDS THAT JIANG WAN BE NAMED THE NEW CHANCELLOR, WHILE FEI YI IS TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE IMPERIAL SECRETARIAT.


WU YI SHOULD BE GIVEN COMMAND OF HANZHONG AS THE GENERAL OF CHARIOTS AND CAVALRY WHILE JIANG WEI SHOULD DIRECT THE ARMY AS THE GENERAL WHO UPHOLDS THE HAN.

MA DAI SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS A LOYAL SERVANT AND APPROPRIATELY REWARDED. LASTLY, HE WISHES TO BE BURIED AT MT. DINGJUN.

HE SPECIFIED FOR HIS REMAINS TO BE BURIED FACING NORTH, AND WITHOUT ANY ALTAR OR MONUMENT TO ADORN HIS GRAVE. IT SEEMS HE WANTED TO KEEP A CAREFUL WATCH ON WEI EVEN IN HIS DEATH...

WU YI THE GENERAL OF CHARIOTS AND CAVALRY, AND JIANG WEI THE GENERAL WHO UPHOLDS THE HAN.

I WILL ACT IN ACCORDANCE TO KONGMING'S WILL. JIANG WAN IS HEREBY THE NEW CHANCELLOR, FEI YI THE DIRECTOR OF THE IMPERIAL SECRETARIAT,

YES?

YANG YI AND MA DAI.

YES?

T... THANK YOU...

YANG YI, YOU BROUGHT OUR TROOPS AND KONGMING'S BODY SAFELY BACK TO SHU. FOR THAT, I APPOINT YOU AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL ARMY.

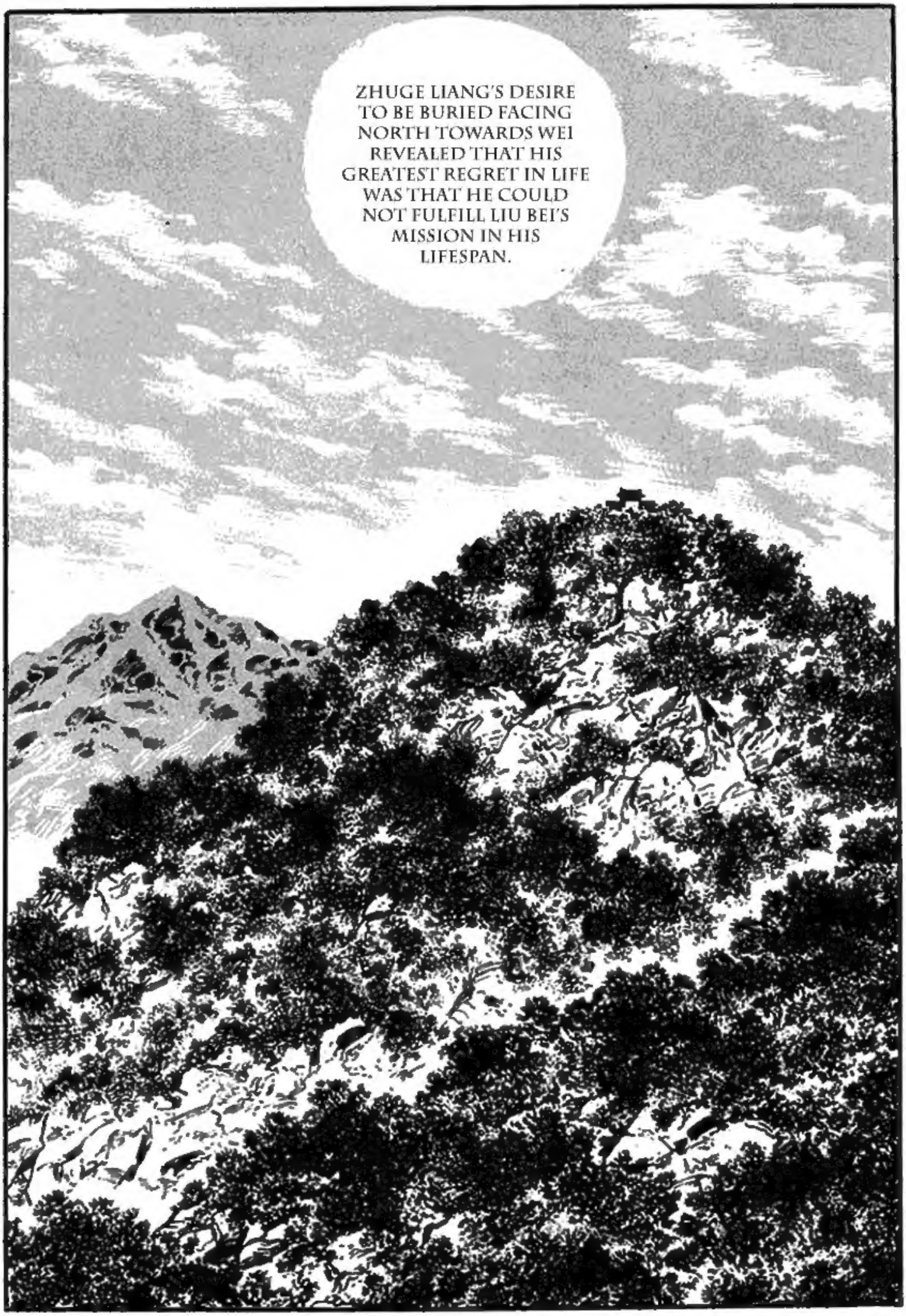
:

MA DAI, YOUR LOYALTY NEVER SWERVED EVEN WHEN YOU UNFAIRLY LOST YOUR TITLE AND RANK. THUS, I HEREBY GRANT YOU ALL THE FORMER TITLE AND RANK HELD BY WEI YAN.

KONGMING'S COFFIN WAS CARRIED TO MT. DINGJUN BESIDE NANZHENG,

AND
BURIED.

THIS HAD ONCE
BEEN WEI LAND
THAT FA ZHENG
AND HUANG
ZHONG HAD TAKEN
BY TRIUMPHING
OVER XIAHOU YUAN.


ZHUGE LIANG'S DESIRE TO BE BURIED FACING NORTH TOWARDS WEI REVEALED THAT HIS GREATEST REGRET IN LIFE WAS THAT HE COULD NOT FULFILL LIU BEI'S MISSION IN HIS LIFESPAN.

ONE MORE VOLUME LEFT!
-TRANSLATED BY HOX-

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三国志

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横山 光輝

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